Gc
929.2
Sp74s
1151651

GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01433 2156

Yours with Respect

Seth Sprague

MEMORIAL

OF

THE SPRAGUE FAMILY:

A

POEM

RECITED AT A MEETING IN DUXBURY OF THE DESCENDANTS AND CONNECTIONS OF

HON. SETH SPRAGUE,

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS EIGHTY-SIXTH BIRTH-DAY,

JULY 4th, 1846.

WITH THE FAMILY GENEALOGY AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES IN NOTES.

By RICHARD SOULE, Jr.

"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers."

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
M DCCC XLVII.

E
F57Ee

200067

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1847,
By Richard Soule, Jr.,
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY THURSTON, TORRY AND CO.

151651

TO

MY WIFE

THIS RECORD OF HER MOTHER'S ANCESTRY

IS

Affectionately Inscribed.

PREFACE.

The poem which follows had its origin in a desire on my part to gratify a few friends, by whom I had been asked to contribute something towards the entertainment of the meeting alluded to in the title-page. It is printed at the solicitation of many who heard it recited; though not without an apprehension that the favor, with which it was listened to, may have been owing rather to the enthusiasm of the occasion than to any intrinsic merit, and that, therefore, what seemed to be substance in the hearing may turn to shadow in the perusal.

But that the book may have a value, for those to whom it is especially addressed, independent of the poem, I have prefixed an account of the meeting which called it forth, and have appended, in the form of notes, a genealogical history, which has been carefully prepared, and which contains, it is believed, all the most important facts that can now be learned in regard to the very respectable ancestors who bore the name of Sprague, and whose descendants are already very numerous and widely scattered. It has been my aim to put these facts into an ac-

cessible shape for all the kinsmen of the family now living, as well as for those who may succeed.

As an additional source of interest, I have sought, by enlarging somewhat upon incidental topics, to illustrate, in a measure, the times in which those ancestors lived, and the scenes with which they were familiar. With the same view, I have discussed at length a few doubtful and disputed points, involved in the treatment of my subject. How far I have succeeded in determining the truth on such matters, is left for the reader to judge.

Whether the results of this undertaking prove edifying to others or not, it has been to me a very pleasant labor, and has brought its own reward. In the performance of it I have drawn from various authentic works and documents, to which references are made, and have received valuable assistance from several individuals to whom my grateful acknowledgments are due, and who are more particularly mentioned, as opportunity occurs, in the sequel. I ought to say here, however, that through the courtesy of a friend I obtained access to the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Society, where I was kindly assisted in my inquiries by the Rev. J. B. Felt, who has charge of the valuable library of that association.

I hope, at least, that this little volume may not be without interest as a memorial, in some sort, of an occasion eminently happy in its immediate enjoyments, and of which the blessed influences are not likely soon to be effaced.

The preceding paragraphs had been put in print and submitted to me for revision — after the work of the press was completed upon the main portion of the volume — when I received tidings of an event, which, for many days, I had feared it would become my melancholy duty to record in this place.

Hon. Seth Sprague died in Duxbury on the evening of the 8th of July instant, four days after the occurrence of his eighty-seventh birth-day, and after an illness of about five weeks. He visited Boston in May last, as was his custom at that season of the year, and attended the meetings of the Anti-Slavery Convention. This effort, it would seem, was too great for his strength. He returned home apparently in good health, but in the course of a few days was seized with an inflammatory disorder, which, though it yielded at length to medical treatment, left him so exhausted, that none of the ordinary appliances could restore the energies of nature. He lingered in this state to the moment of his death, for the most part free from pain, and in the full possession of his faculties.

R. S., Jr.

Boston, July 10, 1847.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
Account of the Meeting	1
Poem	13
Note I. Mention of Lines omitted	25
Note II. The "Long-missed Wanderer"	25
Note III. Hon. Peleg Sprague	26
Note IV. Union of two ancestral lines in Hon. Seth Sprague	26
Note V. Francis Sprague and his descendants	27
Extract from the "N. E. Memorial" in regard to passengers in the "Anne"	27
Old and New Style	28
Residence of Francis Sprague	29
His Character and Standing	30
Son and Daughter of Francis Sprague	32
Old Puritan Taverns	32
John Sprague, son of Francis	33
John Sprague, grandson of Francis, and his children, Ephraim and Benjamin	33
William Sprague, grandson of Francis, his wife, *Grace*, and their children, *Ruth*, *Zeruiah*, *Jethro*, and *Terah*	33
Samuel Sprague, grandson of Francis, his wife *Ruth Alden* and their Children	35
Hon. John Sprague	36

Page.

A. Wife of John Sprague, son of Francis . . 38
B. John Sprague, grandson of Francis; his connection with the Church in Duxbury . . . 38
Pastors of that Church, from 1637 to the present time 39
Genealogies of *Rev. Dr. William B. Sprague*, of Albany, and of *Thomas Sprague*, *Esq.* of Detroit 40
C. Allusions to Grace Sprague, relict of William Sprague, in the Duxbury Records . . 44
NOTE VI. CAPTAIN'S HILL IN DUXBURY . . 45
Burning of the Duxbury Town and Church Records 46
View from the Summit of Captain's Hill . . 47
Forest Trees about Duxbury Bay at the time the Pilgrims arrived 48
First appearance of the White Pine in Duxbury . 49
D. Arrival of the *Mayflower* at Cape Harbor, and expeditions fitted out from her to explore the coast . 50
Correct date for the Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth 50
Their Landing in the night at Clark's Island . 51
Historical Notice of this Island . . . 52
E. Discussion of the question, whether an Island existed on the site of Brown's Island Shoal at the time of the Landing of the Pilgrims . . . 54
NOTE VII. NOTICES OF NATHANIEL CHANDLER AND ZERUIAH SPRAGUE, THE MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS OF HON. SETH SPRAGUE 58
F. Extract from Bancroft's *History of the United States*, giving an Account of the Expedition to the Spanish West Indies under Admiral Vernon . . 60
NOTE VIII. REFERENCES TO THE FIRST WILLIAM SPRAGUE 64
NOTE IX. MEANING OF THE TERM SAGAMORE; AND ACCOUNT OF SAGAMORE JOHN, WHO WELCOMED THE SPRAGUES AND OTHER ENGLISH SETTLERS ON THEIR ARRIVAL AT CHARLESTOWN . . 64
Notice of *Samuel Maverick*, the first settler at Noddle's Island, now East Boston . . . 71

Page.

G. Instructions of the Massachusetts Company to Governor Endicott and his Council, in regard to dealings with the Indians 73

H. Extract from Lewis's *History of Lynn*, giving an Account of the various tribes of Indians in New England at the time of the first settlements in this region 75

NOTE X. ARRIVAL OF THE SPRAGUES AT CHARLESTOWN 78

Biographical Notice of *Ralph Sprague* . . 82

Biographical Notice of *Richard Sprague* . . 84

Biographical Notice of *William Sprague* . . 85

I. Discussion of the question, whether the Spragues came over with Endicott . . . 88

J. Will of *Edward Sprague*, of Upway, England . 97

K. Children of *Ralph Sprague* . . . 100

L. Will of the first *William Sprague* . . . 103

M. Descendants of the first *William Sprague*, through his son Anthony 105

NOTE XI. WELL OF THE FIRST WILLIAM SPRAGUE ON HINGHAM PLAIN 118

NOTE XII. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SAMUEL SPRAGUE OF MARSHFIELD 119

N. Proofs of the identity of Secretary Sprague and Samuel Sprague of Marshfield . . . 123

O. Children of Samuel Sprague of Marshfield . . 125

NOTE XIII. NOTICE OF SAMUEL SPRAGUE, JR., GRANDFATHER OF HON. SETH SPRAGUE — AND OF HIS BROTHER JOHN AND THEIR CHILDREN . 126

P. *Uriah Sprague* of Duxbury and his Children . 131

Q. Allusion to *John Sprague* and his brother *Abijah*, in the Duxbury Records; and the Locality of their Residence 133

R. Allusions in the Duxbury Records to the Town's Poor, in connection with the names of some members of the Sprague family; and Notice of *Sarah McFarland* 133

Page.

S. Historical Account of the Family Mansion in Duxbury 135

Note XIV. Character of Hon. Seth Sprague's Mother 138

Note XV. Obituary Notice of Mrs. Deborah Sprague 144

T. Ancestry of *Mrs. Deborah Sprague* . . 147

Note XVI. Record of Dates at which the deceased Children of Hon. Seth Sprague died 149

Note XVII. Obituary Notices of Mrs. Judith Weston 150

Note XVIII. Biographical Sketch of Hon. Seth Sprague 156

U. Notice of the Celebration in Duxbury on the occasion of opening the Bridge over Blue-fish River 179

Amusing Contemporary Account of Incidents connected with the erection of that Bridge . . 180

V. Letter of Captain Collier to the Selectmen and the Committee of Safety of the Town of Duxbury; and Historical Account of the Captures of Fishing Vessels, belonging to Duxbury, by the English, during the war of 1812 182

W. Names and Dates of Birth of *Hon. Seth Sprague's* Children 191

MEMORIAL

OF

THE SPRAGUE FAMILY.

ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING.

"Bless, then, the meeting and the spot;
For once be every care forgot;
Let gentle Peace assert her power,
And kind Affection rule the hour."

The gathering of the Sprague family in Duxbury, on the 4th of July last, was suggested by the happy results of a similar meeting which took place at the old homestead on the 22d of August, 1845, and of which an interesting notice was published in the Boston Courier of the 28th of that month.* This first meeting was hastily planned, and, in fact, was mainly designed to bring together only those of the family who happened to be in Duxbury at the time. It proved to be so delightful, that a very general desire was expressed that the experiment should be repeated the next year, with a somewhat louder note

* The notice referred to was from the pen of John Owen, Esq.

of preparation, and with the view to gather into the paternal fold all the wanderers of the flock. Accordingly, it was determined that a second and more general meeting should take place on the 4th of July following. This day was selected chiefly because it was the birth-day of the venerable patriarch of the family, but with some reference also to the convenience of those whose business might claim their attention at other seasons.

The meeting was anticipated with great interest by all the relatives. Distance of residence seemed no obstacle to any of them. The valley of Rock River in Illinois was to send its representatives, as well as the neighboring town or the next street. As the time drew near, the faces of the filial pilgrims were turned towards the shrine of their affections. And on the night preceding the festival, the hospitality of friends was liberally exercised in the accommodation of guests, who had come to participate in the long-expected enjoyments of the morrow. When the morning of that day dawned, it seemed as if the sun never shone with more genial benignity, and as if the air was never purer or more refreshing. It was the welcome return of the Nation's birth-day and annual jubilee, and for these assembled kinsmen, it was to be also a season of filial reverence and congratulation, — of friendly rejoicing and thanksgiving.

The family mansion had been enlarged for the reception of the company, and in order to give room for the tables, by the erection of a large tent of can-

vass, which extended from the roof of the house, and quite covered the area of the front yard. When, about noon, the relatives began to throng to the spot, all the doors in the lower part of the mansion were thrown open, so that there might be free range from one apartment to another, including the pavilion in front. Within this ample space a most agreeable hour was spent in mutual greetings and inquiries. Kinsmen long severed had met once more, and some in the younger ranks had now met each other and their elders for the first time. The first to receive salutation and the foremost to extend greeting and welcome, was the venerable head of the household — old in years but young in feeling — in whom the scene awakened, doubtless, a conflict of emotions, but whose evident satisfaction increased the happiness of all the rest.

The signal for dinner soon dispersed the little groups that were scattered in various places in and about the house, and brought all the company together under the canopy of the tent. The tables, which extended in three parallel lines quite across this enclosure, were tastefully laid, and liberally spread with a variety of dishes contributed by the guests themselves. In the centre of the first line, and immediately opposite the front door of the house, was placed the old family table, very large, and of circular shape. Around this were gathered the aged father and his children, as they had often been gathered in times past. On his right sat his eldest son, Hon. Phineas Sprague, and on his left, Hon. Seth Sprague, Jr., his second son; the wife of each sitting

at his side. Next on the left sat his youngest son, Hon. Peleg Sprague, and wife. The circle was completed by four of the daughters and their husbands, with another daughter, who is a widow. At the other tables were seated, but not in precise order, the grandchildren with their husbands and wives, and the great-grandchildren; the whole company numbering one hundred and sixteen. If all the surviving members of each separate family had been present — meaning thereby the descendants of Hon. Seth Sprague's fifteen children, and those connected with them by marriage—the number would have amounted to one hundred and eighty-eight.*

Perfect silence prevailed while the patriarch invoked a blessing on the flock gathered within his fold and on the food spread before them. The next hour was one of innocent mirth and temperate festivity for all.

> "Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
> Not burdened nature,"

it was proposed that another interval should be allowed for diversion and exercise by wandering at will through the mansion and about the grounds of the homestead. Some who had been long separated embraced the opportunity to seek a quiet corner for conversation. Many repaired to the orchard on the north

* This appears from a Register — wherein the names of those present at the meeting from each family were entered, as also of those who were absent or deceased.

of the house for its refreshing shade and coolness. The children of the party, especially, made this the scene of their sports. Some hay had been nicely stacked in one corner of the orchard, upon which they hastened to lay their mischievous fingers, pulling it to pieces to pelt each other, and strewing it broad-cast on its native bed. This was not done, however, without a hint that there would be no harm in it, on the part of some of their elders, who were looking on, and who

* * * * "Smiled the hour away,
Won by the charm of innocence at play."

Grandfather, in the mean time, with a considerate regard for an elderly female friend,* — and an old acquaintance of the family — had gone in his carriage to convey her to the spot, that she might participate in what remained of the enjoyments of the day. The appearance of the carriage, on its return, in the lane leading to the house from the main road, was the signal for another rendezvous beneath the folds of the pavilion. Seated here again the guests awaited the second, and, as it doubtless proved to many, the most interesting part of the entertainment.

This was commenced by singing, in the tune of "*Coronation*," with great spirit and effect,† the fol-

* Miss Sophia Bradford.

† The singing in this instance, and at the close of the day, was conducted by a gentleman and two ladies, not connected with the Sprague family, to whom the relatives are greatly indebted for their kindness in consenting to perform this service, and for the very acceptable manner in which their aid was rendered.

lowing lines, written for the occasion by Henry Winsor, a grandson of the patriarch.

THE MEETING.

On this the Patriarch's natal day,
Once more his children come; —
Their children's children bound and shout
Around his ancient home,
To cheer him, time-worn, hoary man,
Whose eye will soon be dim,
Whose feeble ear now wakes again
To this our social hymn.

With blessings greet him; his brave heart
Still holds him on his way;
Untiring, toiling, striving, he
Has known no idle day:
No idle day in all his life,
But, battling for the right;
Whate'er his hand could find to do,
He did it with his might.

Among us some are growing gray,
And some are in life's prime,
And some, with youthful promise, come
To keep the holy time;
In all there beats some pulse of him
Whose pulses now are low
And long, when he hath passed away,
This stream of life shall flow.

Low be the strain; the parent spring
Is ebbing to its sand;
'T is homeward bound to Him who holds
The Ocean in his hand.
But louder swell the choral song,
For lo! a cheering sight,—
Through hundred gushing springlet heads,
It comes again to light.

After this prelude all eyes were turned towards the venerable man in the centre of the group, who requested that his children of every degree should hear what he had to say. Laying on the table a manuscript, he read therefrom, in a full voice and with much animation, a brief sketch of the family genealogy, interspersed with anecdotes of ancestors and of past times. This was listened to by young and old with the deepest attention. While it was interesting as a narrative, it was highly impressive by the lessons of wisdom which it taught.

Next in order came the recitation of the poem which forms a part of this volume.

To this succeeded an address by a son-in-law of the patriarch, William Sampson, Esq., who had come up with his wife to the family jubilee, from the borders of Rock River in Illinois. He was led from this circumstance to contrast the peculiarities of his adopted State with those features which distinguish New England. Of the former he spoke in terms of high admiration, but with no desire to disparage the land of his birth, and the dwelling-place of most of his friends.

The hours of the day had now so far advanced, that another dispersion was suggested to give opportunity for the preparation of the evening meal. This, however, occasioned only a brief delay; and in the course of half an hour, all had returned to the tables to take tea. Luxuries of various kinds, from the larders of the several households there represented, were as gratefully partaken of as they had been bountifully supplied. And the social ease and exhilaration that prevailed seemed to increase as the day declined.

In the mean time the assembly was fast increasing by the arrival of several friends, not related to the family, who had been attracted to the spot by their generous sympathy with the sentiments and affections by which so many kinsmen had been drawn together.

The announcement that Hon. Peleg Sprague was about to address them, soon imposed silence upon the merry talkers, and arrested the attention of all. It is to be regretted that his words found no record but in the memories of those who listened; for, though the impression of what he uttered abides, no magic of recollection can restore the beauty of the language that conveyed it. Especially is this true of the eulogy he pronounced on his late-lost and lamented mother.*

---

* While Hon. Peleg Sprague was speaking, an old cradle was brought out of the house and placed in a conspicuous position in the tent. He stated that this was the most venerable, if

The voice of Hon. Seth Sprague, Jr., was the next to win the ears of the company, while he alluded briefly, but with much feeling, to the impressions made upon his own mind by the events of the day, and to the lasting influences for good which they would be likely to have upon all present. His remarks were abridged by the lateness of the hour; for the lengthening shadows now gave warning that the moment of separation was at hand.

Some of the sentiments awakened at that parting moment — the satisfaction of fraternal hearts in the performance of filial duty, and the melancholy pleasure of the retrospect, blended with cheering hopes of the future — these are well expressed in the following lines,* the singing of which in the tune of "*Old Hundred*," by the whole company, standing, was the final incident of the family meeting.

THE PARTING.

'T is writ upon that sacred page,
Transmitted from the Mount of Fire;
There is no better pilgrimage
Than that of children to their sire.

---

indeed it was not the only heir-loom of the family. Its precise age was not known; but it was very old, for it had belonged to the ancestors of his mother, who was herself rocked in it as well as all her children. It was now, he said, his property, having been presented to him by his father.

* By the author of "The Meeting."

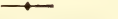
The circle formed must break again,
How brief has been this social hour!
But kindly acts are never vain,
And truthful words have lasting power.

Remembered long or soon forgot,
These words and acts shall still remain;
Time's seed-field holds them, seen or not,
And they shall spring to life again.

To keep our hearts be all our care;
None can the ways of God foretell,
But each may breathe this parting prayer—
A short and earnest one; Fare-well.

POEM.

POEM.



Pray tell me friends, what task is quite unblest,
If not to woo the Muses — by request?
Needs any yet to learn, they never deign
To favor suit reluctant, urged with pain?
That the Piërian maids are much the same
As other maids, who scorn a lukewarm flame?
"Unbidden let thy numbers flow," they say,
"Or we are heedless of the vows ye pay."

Enough of this; my verse itself will teach,
In every line, the doctrine that I preach.
Yet, as the housewife, whom her guests surprise
Intently busy o'er her weekly pies,
Pleads for defects — observed by them or not —
Her oven was too small and scarcely hot;

So let me say for your indulgence' sake —
For poets' crudities need time to bake —
June's waning moon scarce saw my work begun,
And only yester-eve pronounced it done. 1.

When children to the ancestral mansion turn, —
That dear retreat where best affections burn —
Where puddings, pies, and all good things abound,
As Christmas or Thanksgiving day comes round;
'T is hard to say which most attracts them there,
Respectful love, or love of bounteous fare.
But no such naughty doubts need us perplex,
Nor grandpa's stores the groaning tables vex;
For we, to cheer his heart with mirth and song,
Have come, and brought our frugal meal along.

Children we are of every size and age;
Some in life's spring, some in its latest stage.
Here sons and daughters round the Patriarch's chair
Meet children's sons and daughters, many a pair;
On their own heads their father's blessing call,
While theirs on two successive lines may fall.
Thrice happy sire! that Heaven should grant to thee
Its largest boon of goodly progeny:
And still more rarely blest that, soon or late,
Each child of thine should find a fitting mate.
To such unwonted chance, to-day is due,
So great a host comes up to welcome you.

From far and near, New England's vallies o'er,
To this loved shrine the filial pilgrims pour.
Nay here to-day our joyful eyes behold
One long-missed wanderer from her father's fold, II
Who leaves a home the western hills beside,
Where Mississippi rolls his giant tide.

Named with delights that on our gathering wait,
No care is pressing and no business great:
The farmer's weeds that so perversely grow,
Find for a time a respite from the hoe:
The merchant shuts his books, all toil gives o'er,
To visit home and be a boy once more:
Even long-robed Justice must herself defer
To one who fervently hath worshipped her, III
That he, too, for a transient hour, may share
The draught inspiring of this hallowed air.

Hallowed indeed! not only they are here,
Who, thronging, present to the eye appear;
But other friends, passed on before to bliss,
Return approving to a scene like this:
And while around us their transfigured forms
Are hovering, and every memory warms
With the airy traces on its tablets seen,
Of what their brief-spent lives on earth have been;
Let Fancy frame a spell, that shall restore
In clearer lines the image that they wore.

As when two streams, from one sequestered source,
Apart pursue a long and devious course;

Then join their rich and swollen tides in one,
Through many a gladdened plain and vale to run;
So, Patriarch, two branches from thy ancestry
With like commingled wealth unite in thee. IV.

He of thy name, who, from the Father-land,
First sought these shores, was of the Pilgrim band: V
One of those few, brave and true-hearted souls,
Whose fame is wafted far as ocean rolls.
Beside yon height, along this wood-girt bay,
The exile's axe is heard at opening day: VI
While from his cabin curls the smoky wreath,
And tender wife prepares the meal beneath.
At length, before his stroke the forest yields;
And in its place spread out the smiling fields.
Heaven grants a son to turn the stubborn soil,
And daughters rise to ease the mother's toil.
So blessed the pilgrim's days serene declined:
He died; and left an honored name behind —
A name not tarnished as it travelled through
From son to son, from daughter down to you.
That daughter! here my meagre strain obeys
A pious wish, and for a moment stays. VII

Her youth was happy, though her lot was low;
She knew no luxury nor cared to know.
The bread of industry inured to eat,
Each crumb was blest and every morsel sweet.
Her charms of feature and her grace of life,
Soon winning love, adorned her more — a wife.
In passing years — long years of happiness —

Seven maidens fair rise up to aid and bless.
The father leaves this happy home to sail
Where Cuba's balm floats on the tropic gale.
Ah! siren fragrance; for its flattering breath
To him conveyed the barbed shaft of death!
And while the anxious eye, day after day,
Looks for the wanderer on his homeward way;
The tidings speed on the careering keel,
That with the lightning's shock, shall soon reveal
To that loved wife and fondly cherished brood,
Their orphan doom and her sad widowhood.
Angel of Faith! thy charm be potent here
To heal the wound and dry the bitter tear.
That charm availed; hers was the Christian's trust,
That sees the dead spring living from the dust.
She taught the orphans, that — their parent gone —
A Father's care was not from them withdrawn;
That — duty done and every work performed —
The hungry should be fed, the naked warmed.
And you, our venerated Sire, whom she
Her grandchild called, as you were proud to be;
You oft have seen, with how much patient cheer
She bore her lonely lot from year to year:
Have heard the shuttle's quick-returning stroke,
The distaff humming and the thread that broke,
As she and maidens plied their daily task,
And you stood by to listen and to ask.

One of that orphaned household had before
To a new home transferred the precious lore —
So aptly by a mother' practice taught,

So meekly learned, with so much blessing fraught —
'Twas she who gave thee birth, who nursed thy youth,
Thy mother, and thy early guide to truth.

Here pause; before we touch that pleasing theme,
Turn we once more to trace the ancestral stream.

Another of thy house — so may we call
The name, though no escutcheon decks the wall — VIII
A later exile, found the friendly shore,
Where dwelt in peace the gentle Sagamore. IX
The stranger was the youngest in a triple band,
That parting sad from Albion's southern strand,
Thrice must repeat the long and last farewell,
As fade the scenes where home's loved inmates dwell. X
O, bid them forth, ye three that lonely stay;
They bear rich treasure to a future day!
Ours is the joy — so have good angels willed —
To sing and see the prophecy fulfilled.

The brothers were for worth and zeal renowned;
In every Christian work the foremost found;
The Church has on its records high emblazed
What debt it owes them, and has nobly praised;
The State, too, claimed their oft-bespoken aid,
And to their names has well-earned homage paid:
Ralph, Richard, William — these were names revered
Wherever known, and to all hearts endeared.

Go, sit thou by the crystal well, whence he,

Our ancestor — last of the honored three —
On Hingham's Plain, drew forth the frequent draught. XI
When thou its cooling wave hast duly quaffed;
Far down the fountain's tortuous wall, —
Whose time-soiled stones seem trembling ere they fall —
See how its tranquil depth the pebble shows,
And mossy wreath that on its pavement grows!
So, through the vanished years when Age looks back,
Life's quiet morning bounds the rugged track.

The name, transmitted in succeeding years,
Ever with wonted lustre re-appears;
Now on yon shores a full-orbed light it yields, —
So fitly titled from their marshy fields — XII
Now blends with kindred beams, where they are found
In steady radiance on this Pilgrim ground. XIII
Or, as the twin-like streams our opening strain
Supposed to part, then meet in one again;
So may we here two kindred stocks unite,
Disparted long, now one by marriage rite.

Once more the vision, that we faintly saw
Approaching slow and then apace withdraw,
Re-dawns upon our long-awaiting sight,
In airy vestments clad and heavenly light. XIV
Thou dear seraphic shade! so pure thou wert,
We almost fear to do thee cruel hurt,
If we but breathe, in our untutored lay,

The meed of praise our tongue would gladly pay.
Yet, when we think how much thy spirit grieved
To see the smallest want go unrelieved;
Assurance springs that thou wilt not refuse,
For those who live, the offering of the Muse.

If they could speak, who walked with her in life
As friends and neighbors, partners in its strife;
How would their lips, in emulous discourse,
The glowing homage of their hearts enforce.
With what delight the generous deeds proclaim,
That wreathe their halo round her sainted name;
The eager, sympathetic aid she lent,
Where sickness bound, or other burthen bent; —
Her soothing speech, when sorrow wrung the breast,
That brought relief and proved the stricken blest.
But here are living witnesses to tell
The love they bore, who knew her worth so well.
See in our midst, with hoary brow and sage,
Her last born son and guardian of her age;
Ask him the story of her life, and say
If woman's steps e'er found a better way;
Mark how she blended dignity and grace, —
Man's strength with virtues of the gentler race;
How thoughtful of each word and action's aim!
How prompt in action when the moment came!
And you — her offspring in the next degree —
How do you chide the poet's minstrelsy,
That fails to sound that dear familiar word,
And seems untuned till *Grandma's* name is heard.
His lyre, abashed, would fain suspend its tone,

To hear the melting pathos of your own:
You saw her smile upon your childish plays,
And shared her counsel in your riper days:
When any trouble crossed, or doubt perplexed, —
Were it a great or little thing that vexed, —
Who could so well as she the grief allay?
Who fitter words or more convincing say?
In your best moments, when the heart o'erflows
In praise to Him from whom your being rose;
When thanks spontaneous crowd upon the tongue;
And grateful memories o'er the past are flung: —
If tribute pours for any earthly guide,
That walked an Angel ever at your side;
After a Mother's form before you brought,
Whose rises next responding to the thought?
"'T is hers," — your ready lips at once aver, —
"'T is Grandma's self, whom could we name but her?"

The minstrel's hand has swept another string,
That echoes tones he would that you might sing;
For only they may fitly chant the song,
Who lately lost a Mother loved so long. xv
And yet, the dear remembrance so awakes
Delightful thoughts, which he with you partakes;
He dares to murmur in a faltering note,
An artless line that true affection wrote.

Her full-spanned life in one smooth current ran,
And sinless closed as when its race began:
Mild as the breeze that scarce reveals its course,

NOTES.

"Next to the sense of religious duty and moral feeling, I hardly know what should bear with stronger obligation on a liberal and enlightened mind, than a consciousness of alliance with excellence which is departed."

WEBSTER'S DISCOURSE AT PLYMOUTH.

"What satisfaction would it be to me, to hear any one thus describe to me the manners, faces, behavior, the most ordinary words and fortunes of my ancestors! How attentively should I listen to it! Truly, it would denote a bad nature to despise even the portraits of our friends and predecessors, the fashion of their garments and of their arms. I carefully preserve a scrap of writing, a seal, a prayer-book, a particular sword, that have been theirs; and I have not removed from my closet the long staves which my father used to carry in his hand."

MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS, BOOK II. CHAP. XVIII.

NOTES.

NOTE I. Page 14.

A few of the introductory lines of the poem, as recited, have been omitted; for the reason that they contained allusions which would be likely to be of only temporary interest, and which might have been obscure without such explanations as it would hardly have been fair to put in the form of a permanent record.

NOTE II. Page 15.

> Nay, here to-day our joyful eyes behold
> One long-missed wanderer from her father's fold.

The wife of William Sampson, Esq., who removed from Duxbury to Illinois in September, 1834, and is now a resident of Como, on Rock River, not far from its junction with the Mississippi. The presence of

this daughter and her husband at the family meeting, after so long an absence, and the cordial greetings that were extended to them on every side, contributed greatly to the interest of the occasion.

NOTE III. Page 15.

Even long-robed Justice must herself defer
To one who fervently hath worshipped her.

Hon. Peleg Sprague, formerly Representative and Senator in Congress from Maine, now United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

NOTE IV. Page 16.

So, Patriarch, two branches from thy ancestry
With like commingled wealth unite in thee.

Hon. Seth Sprague is descended on both sides from ancestors who bore the name of Sprague: on his mother's side from Francis Sprague — one of the Plymouth Pilgrims — who is the subject of the next note: and on his father's side from William Sprague, one of three brothers who settled at Charlestown in 1629.*

---

* See Note X.

I can find no evidence that these ancestors were related; but there is a strong probability that they sprang from the same stock.

NOTE V. Page 16.

> He of thy name, who, from the Fatherland,
> First sought these shores, was of the Pilgrim band.

The maternal ancestor of Hon. Seth Sprague, as already stated, was Francis Sprague; who arrived at Plymouth, in the ship Anne, July, 1623.* He was one of those "passengers,"† who, as Morton writes,‡ "seeing the low and poor condition of those that were before them, were much daunted and dismayed, and, according to their divers humors, were diversely affected. Some wished themselves in England again; others fell on weeping, fancying their own misery in what they saw in others; other some pitying the distress they saw their friends had been long in, and still were under. In a word, all were full of sadness; only some of their old friends rejoiced

---

* Old Colony Records. Young's Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 352. Mr. Young says, "Those who came in the first three ships, the Mayflower, the Fortune, and the Anne, are distinctively called the "*old comers*, or the *forefathers*."

† Reference is made to those who arrived in the "Anne," and the "James," the former of which vessels preceded the latter by about ten days.

‡ New England's Memorial, Davis's edition, p. 102.

to see them, and that it was no worse with them, for they could not expect it should be better, and now hoped they should enjoy better days together. And truly it was no marvel they should be thus affected, for they were in a very low condition, both in respect of food and clothing at that time." And Governor Bradford, in allusion to these same "passengers," says: "The best dish we could present them with, is a lobster, or a piece of fish, without bread, or any thing else but a cup of fair spring water; and the long continuance of this diet, with our labors abroad, has somewhat abated the freshness of our complexion; but God gives us health."*

It appears from the Records of the Colony Court, that Francis Sprague was not admitted a freeman of the Colony until June 7th, 1637.† The probability

---

* See New England's Memorial, Davis's edition, p. 103, and Young's Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 353.

† I have given this date, and all others previous to 1752, so far as respects the days, according to the Old Style. To reduce the day in a date of Old Style to the corresponding day of New Style, we have only to add ten days, if the date is previous to 1700, and eleven days, if it is between 1700, and October, 1752, when the New Style was adopted in England and her Colonies by act of Parliament. Thus, the date in the text would correspond to June 17th, 1637, New Style. Previous to October, 1752, the year, according to the English mode of reckoning, began on the 25th of March, which was counted as the first month. But the New Style, by which the year began on the 1st of January, had been used in Catholic countries ever since 1582. Hence, before the passage of the act referred to, it became a custom in England

is, that he was under age at the time of his arrival. He settled in Duxbury before June, 1637, the earliest date at which he is mentioned in the Colony Records as being an inhabitant of that town. Nothing is known in regard to the locality of his residence, except that it was somewhere on the shore between Captain's Hill* and Blue-fish River. In an interesting paper, by the late Alden Bradford, entitled, "*Notes on Duxbury*," and published in the *Massachusetts Historical Collections*,† it is stated — as a matter of record — that "a pathway was early laid out from Plymouth, over Jones's River, and crossing Island Creek, wound along *near the shore of the bay* to accommodate Standish, Brewster, *Sprague* and others in the south and east part of the town, and then led over Blue River, near the head of the salt water, and, passing John Alden's settlement on the north side of this river, was continued over Stony

---

and her dependencies, to indicate the year by double figures in all dates occurring between January 1st, and the 25th of March. Thus by *February* 7th, 1697 — 8, is to be understood February 7th, 1697, taking the 25th of March as the beginning of the year, or February 7th, 1698, if the year commences with the 1st of January. In all the dates of this volume the *year* is made to correspond with New Style; but the *day*, in dates prior to 1752, is given according to the Old Style. See Quarterly Register, vol. xiv., p. 254. See also a lucid note in Rev. W. I. Budington's excellent History of the First Church of Charlestown, pp. 180 – 183.

* See Note VI.

† Vol. X., second series.

Brook, near Philip Delano, who had just begun a farm there, by Duck Hill, to Careswell, the residence of Governor Winslow."

Standish and Brewster, it is well known, resided on the south-eastern side of the peninsula, now called "the Nook," of which Captain's Hill forms a part. But whether *Sprague*, who is named with them in this extract, is to be classed with those who dwelt in the south, or with those living in the east part of the town, does not clearly appear. It is most probable, however, that as the names of Standish and Brewster must have been intended to represent the first locality, that of *Sprague* was introduced as representing the last.

According to the writer just quoted, Francis Sprague was a man of influence and property for the times in which he lived. Some idea may be formed of his comparative standing in point of property from the annexed list of taxes assessed in 1633 on some individuals of the Colony, who either at that time or subsequently were inhabitants of Duxbury.

	£.	s.		£.	s.
Miles Standish,	1	16.	John Howland,	1	4.
William Brewster,	1	7.	Francis Sprague,	0	18.
John Alden,	1	4.	Philip Delanoy,	0	18.
William Collier,	2	5.	William Bassett,	1	17.
Jonathan Brewster,	1	7.	George Soule,	0	09.*

It seems that the Puritans had one mode of signalizing a man's merit, which would be taken as rather

* Court Records.

equivocal testimony if it were applied, in the same sense, to any person in New England at the present time. The historian, last quoted,* infers that Mr. Sprague was a "grave and sober person," because he was permitted to "sell spirituous liquors;" "for," says he, "it was *only* the more sober and grave persons who were licensed for this purpose."

And yet it appears that grave and sober though he was, he did not wholly escape the displeasure of the scrupulous magistrates of those days. The Court Records disclose the fact that he was several times brought before them for what they considered departures from the strict line of duty. But there is nothing to show, that, according to the more liberal modern standard of estimating the characters of men, he might not have been a person of worth and great respectability. A fair interpretation, however, of the evidence, drawn from the Old Colony Records, warrants the conclusion that Francis Sprague was a person of ardent temperament and of great independence of mind; in short, that his sympathies with the principles of the Puritan Fathers did not go to the length of a passive acquiescence in all the enactments of their civil code.

He was living in Duxbury as late as 1666,† after which date his name does not appear in the Records. From this circumstance, taken in connection with the fact that his son John succeeded to his business

* Notes on Duxbury, before cited.

† Court Records.

of "keeping an Ordinary"* at Duxbury in 1669, it may be inferred that his death took place between these dates. The name of his wife I have not been able to ascertain: no allusion is any where made to her. They had one son, John, and three daughters, Anna, Mary and Mercy. The latter married William Tubbs, November 9th, 1637.† From two entries ‡

* "Josselyn, in his Voyages, mentions calling (1638) at 'one Long's Ordinary': and writes of these old Puritan taverns as though he was annoyed by the strict surveillance to which they were subjected. 'If a stranger went in, he was presently followed by one appointed to that office, who would thrust himself into his company uninvited, and if he called for more drink than the officer thought in his judgment he could soberly bear away, he would presently countermand it, and appoint the proportion beyond which he could not get a drop.' Besides: mine host could permit no tobacco to be used about his premises, no cards to be shuffled, no dice to be thrown. And if he took more than six-pence for a meal or a penny 'for an ale quart of beer out of meal times,' or sold cakes or bunns, except for marriages or burials, or like special occasions, the penalty to which he was liable was ten shillings. But by paying a round sum into the colonial treasury, he was allowed to 'sell wine and strong water made in the country.'"

FROTHINGHAM'S HIST. OF CHARLESTOWN, p. 96.

† Old Colony Records.

‡ The entries are, the first literally, and the second in substance — as follows:

1. 1644. "Robert Lawrence was admitted to be an inhabitant of this town, provided his father-in-law, Sprague, be willing he should seat on lands formerly granted to him."

2. 1649. Reference is made to a former grant of land by the Colony to Francis Sprague.

A Robert Lawrence, who might have been the same as R. L.,

in the Marshfield Records, it would seem that one of the other daughters married Robert Lawrence of that town.

John, the only son of Francis Sprague, married Ruth Bassett in 1655,* and died at Duxbury in 1676.† They resided for a time in Marshfield; as the birth of one of their children is noted in the Records of that town in 1659. They had three sons, John, William, and Samuel; and four daughters, Eliza, Ruth, born in Marshfield, February 12th, 1659, Desire and Dorcas. The latter married Joseph Hatch, of Falmouth, January 10th, 1713.‡

John, son of John, and grandson of Francis, was constable of Duxbury in 1692, and held other public trusts there at various times from 1684 to 1701. His wife's Christian name was Lydia, and, according to the Duxbury Records, they had two sons, *Ephraim*, born March 15th, 1685, and *Benjamin*, born July 15th, 1686.§

William, son of John, and grandson of Francis,

---

above named, was one of the Trustees of Falmouth, Maine, in 1684, and died at Fort Royal from a mortal wound in 1690. [MS. letter of Miss Marcia A. Thomas, of Marshfield, to whom I am indebted for other facts in regard to the history of families in that neighborhood.]

* See under A.

† MS. notes of the late Samuel Davis, kindly loaned to me by his brother, Isaac P. Davis, Esq.

‡ Duxbury Records.

§ See under B.

died at Duxbury in 1712, leaving a widow, whose Christian name was Grace,* and four children. He is only once named as an incumbent of a town office. He was chosen surveyor of highways, March 17th, 1708. The names of his children and the dates of their birth are thus stated in the Records: —

Ruth,	born	February 22d, 1702.
Zeruiah,	"	December 10th, 1704.
Jethro,	"	November 30th, 1709.
Terah,	"	February 17th, 1712.

Ruth married Samuel Kein, April 19th, 1719.

Zeruiah married *Nathaniel Chandler*, March 19th, 1724. Her husband died in 1741,† leaving her a widow with seven daughters, one of whom, *Mercy*, was the mother of Hon. Seth Sprague.‡

Jethro married Patience Bartlett, December 12th, 1738. She died in May, 1741. Subsequently, he married Bethia Sprague — daughter of Samuel, and aunt of Hon. Seth Sprague — and removed to Kennebec, Maine, after 1760; under which date he is mentioned in the Duxbury Records for the last time, as having been drawn to serve on the petty and grand juries at the Plymouth Court. March 20th, 1748, he was chosen constable of Duxbury, but de-

---

* See under C.

† See Note VII., and under F.

‡ See Note VII.

clined to serve. He had two children by his first wife, a daughter Silvina, and a son William.*

Respecting *Terah* nothing further is recorded.

Samuel, son of John, and grandson of Francis, was married to Ruth Alden, November 29th, 1694. They had six children, three sons and three daughters, whose names and the dates of whose birth, as stated in the Records, are as follow: —

Noah,	born	January 18th, 1696.	
Elizabeth,	"	July 4th, 1699.	
Nathaniel,	"	January 10th, 1702.	
Samuel,	"	June 23d, 1704.	
Mary	"	December 20th, 1706.	[Died, April 19th, 1708.]
Priscilla,	born	March 18th, 1709.	

This Samuel Sprague, son of John, and grandson of Francis, was chosen constable of Duxbury, March 6th, 1700, and town clerk, March 16th, 1709, which latter post he held for one year only. In 1710 he is

---

* The dates of their birth are given in the Records with remarkable precision, as follows:

"Silvina Sprague ye daughter of Jethro Sprague and Patience his wife was born October 8th, 1739, about twelve of ye clock in ye day."

"William Sprague ye son of Jethro Sprague and Patience his wife was born November ye 19th, 1740, about twelve of ye clock in ye night."

See a fac-simile of Jethro Sprague's autograph in Fig. 8, taken from his signature as witness to a deed, which is dated March 28th, 1748.

1151651

styled *Lieutenant*, though this title is not again applied to him. It is uncertain whether he acted in any public capacity after 1710; the name not occurring again in the Records in connection with town offices until 1729, from which year to 1742 it occurs very frequently; but under circumstances which leave room for doubt whether the grandson of Francis Sprague is intended, or Samuel Sprague, son of Samuel of Marshfield, who removed from that town to Duxbury about 1709.* The name, however, must have been meant to apply to the latter, if, as Judge Mitchell states,† Samuel, the grandson of Francis, "removed to Rochester and died there in 1723, leaving a widow Elizabeth, a son Ephraim, and perhaps others." But if this statement is correct, he must have left Duxbury after 1710, and the widow referred to must have been his second wife.‡

---

* See Note XIII.

† History of Bridgewater.

‡ I find in the *Biographical Notices of Distinguished Men in New England*, by the late Alden Bradford, the following account of Hon. JOHN SPRAGUE:

"He was born in Rochester, County of Plymouth, and was graduated at Harvard College, with the class of 1765, with the character of a good scholar. He studied law, and soon settled in the county of Worcester. In law, as a science, he was a great proficient, and his practice was extensive. He did not rank among the ardent and decided whigs of 1775; but when the Justices of the Court in Worcester County, and the gentlemen of the bar, were requested by the County Convention, sitting there in September, 1774, to suspend all legal proceedings, until there

According to the following copy of a receipt in the Town Records, it would seem that his trade was that of a carpenter:

"Reckoned with ye town agents Feby ye 25th anno 1707. Then recd. of said agents the sum of one hundred and eighty pounds in full for building ye meeting house in Duxbury. I say recd. by me, Samuel Sprague.

Aug. 18, 1708.

Recorded,

JOHN WADSWORTH, T. Clerk."

From the nature of the public duties which these three grandsons of Francis Sprague, *John*, *William*, and *Samuel*, were called upon to perform, I infer

---

should be more content among the people as to the measures of the British towards the colonies, he and some others readily complied with the request. He afterwards supported the measures adopted by the patriots, for the preservation of the rights and liberties of the colonies, and had a seat in the General Court, as a member from Lancaster. Subsequently Mr. Sprague was the Sheriff for Worcester county, and Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He possessed the entire confidence of his fellow-citizens, as a man of probity and good judgment; and those who best knew him, were willing to repose their highest worldly interests in his hands. He died in 1800, at the age of sixty years."

I have not been able to determine from what ancestor the subject of this notice descended. But the fact of his having been born in Rochester, taken in connection with the statement of Judge Mitchell, referred to in the text, would seem to indicate that he was a descendant of Samuel, grandson of Francis Sprague.

that they were noted for intelligence and moral worth.

A. Page 33.

From the manner in which the wife of John Sprague, son of Francis, is mentioned in the following extract from the Duxbury Records, it would seem that she married a second husband by the name of Thomas:

"In reference unto the agreement of John Sprague and his mother (now *Ruth Thomas*) at Plymouth, in Court, June the sixth, 1683; aboute the bounds of their land at Duxbury, we, whose names are underwritten, being employed aboute that business have to the content and assent of both parties settled the bounds as followeth," &c.

"John Tracy,
John Soule,
William Pabodie."

"The above written, &c., ... was truly transcribed out of the original agreement and recorded by order,

p. me Rhodolphus Thacher,
this 22 March, 1693 – 4."

B. Page 33.

It is probable that John Sprague, grandson of Francis, was a conspicuous member of the Church in Duxbury, from the manner in which the following extracts from the Records make mention of his name in connection with the names of Rev. Messrs. Wiswall and Robinson, who were

pastors of that Church successively for about seventy years." *

---

* Dr. Young, in his *Chronicles of the Pilgrims* (p. 394), has this note : —

"The Church in Duxbury was formed in 1632. 'Those that lived on their lots on the other side of the bay (called Duxburrow) could no longer bring their wives and children to the public worship and church meetings here (at Plymouth), but with such burthen, as growing to some competent number, they sued to be dismissed and became a body of themselves; and so they were dismissed about this time (though very unwillingly), and some time after being united into one entire body, they procured Rev. Mr. Ralph Partrich to be their pastor.' MS. Records Plym. Church, p. 36."

There have been ten pastors of this Church since the incorporation of the town in 1637. Their names and the dates of their settlement, so far as I have been able to ascertain the latter, are as follow :—

Rev. Ralph Partridge settled in 1637. [Continued pastor until his death in 1658.]
" John Holmes, settled after 1658.
" Ichabod Wiswall, " about 1670. [He was pastor about 30 years.]
" John Robinson settled in 1700.
" Samuel Veazie " " 1739.
" Charles Turner " " 1755.
" Zedekiah Sanger " " 1776.
" John Allyn " " 1788.
" Benjamin Kent " " 1826.
" Josiah Moore " " 1834.

I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Moore, the clergyman last named and the present pastor of the Church, for several of the dates in this list. I have consulted also a note to the "Topographical Description of Duxborough," by Alden Bradford. Hist. Coll., vol. ii., pp. 7, 8.

"May 7th, 1700. Samuel Seabury and *John Sprague*, were chosen to give Mr. Ichabod Wiswall a deed of the land which the town did formerly grant unto him."

"July 15th, 1701. The town chose ensign John Tracie, Mr. David Alden, Mr. William Brewster, and *Mr. John Sprague* to treat with Mr. John Robinson, whom the town called to the ministry, concerning his settlement in Duxbury."

I find no mention of this John Sprague, nor of his sons Ephraim and Benjamin, as inhabitants of Duxbury, after 1701. And none of the descendants of either of them have ever since been known to reside there.

In the course of an attempt to trace the genealogies of the Rev. Dr. William B. Sprague, of Albany, and of Thomas Sprague, Esq., of Detroit, Michigan — the great grandfather of each of whom resided in Lebanon, Connecticut * — I have been led to the conclusion that they are both descended from Francis Sprague, through his grandson *John* above named, who, with his sons Ephraim and Benjamin, as I infer, removed from Duxbury to Lebanon after 1701, and before 1707.

The considerations on which I adopt this inference are as follow : —

1. Judge Mitchell states, † in regard to the immediate descendants of Francis Sprague, that they "spread away upon the south shore into Rochester, Fairhaven, &c."

---

* This fact I have on the authority of a letter of the Rev. Dr. Sprague, addressed to me, and of a letter from Thomas Sprague, Esq., to Hon. Seth Sprague.

† Letter in the 2d edition of the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham.*

The town of Lebanon, Connecticut — within sixty miles of the place last named, and only about twenty miles from the waters of Long Island Sound — may fairly come within this specification. The statement, however, is not true in regard to *all* the descendants of Francis Sprague, for some of them, as I have shown, remained in Duxbury.

2. Rev. Dr. Sprague, in his letter to me, states that the name of his great-grandfather was either *Benjamin* or *John*, and that according to tradition he went from Duxbury and settled in Lebanon; in the neighborhood of which place Dr. Sprague was born.

3. I have the assurance of the Town Clerk of Lebanon * that the marriage of *Benjamin Sprague and Mary Woodworth*, December 29th, 1707, is entered on the Records of that town; as also the marriage of *John Sprague and Mary Babcock*, February 22d, 1710; and that the former had fourteen children, and the latter seven.

Now in the list of the descendants of William Sprague, of Hingham, as given in this volume, and among the descendants of Ralph Sprague, of Charlestown, so far as I know them, there are only two individuals bearing the names of *Benjamin* and *John*, who could possibly have been referred to in the Records of Lebanon. These are the grandsons of William of Hingham, and sons of William who settled in Providence. But of them, Benjamin was born, January 3d, 1695, and therefore in December, 1707,

* John Wattles, Esq., who has very kindly and promptly replied to two communications of mine in reference to what the Records of Lebanon contain concerning persons of the name of Sprague. He states that there is no individual of that name at present residing there.

was not quite thirteen years old; and John, who was born September 13th, 1692, was only a few months over seventeen in February, 1710. It is hardly to be supposed that the former could have been the Benjamin mentioned in the Lebanon Records as having been married in December, 1707; and as to the latter, it is at least improbable that he was the John whose marriage is stated to have taken place in February, 1710. Thirteen and seventeen years are certainly precocious ages for assuming the relations of married life.

But on the supposition that the Benjamin Sprague, referred to in the Lebanon Records, was the son of John — grandson of Francis — and that the father himself is intended by the name of *John* in these Records, no such objections on the score of age will arise. This Benjamin was born, July 15th, 1685; and, therefore, on the 29th December, 1707, was over twenty-two years old. It is further to be noticed that his mother's Christian name was *Lydia*, and that the same name occurs in the list of his children given below. As to his father, the Mary Babcock, to whom John is recorded to have been married in February, 1710, may have been his second wife. The number of the children of each, as stated, seems to warrant this last conjecture.

Benjamin and Mary Sprague, according to the Lebanon Records, had fourteen children: —

John, born September 5th, 1709.
Eliakim, " October 10th, 1711.
Mary, " March 5th, 1713.
William, " September 29th, 1715.
Phineas, " September 5th, 1717.
Jerusha, " October 20th, 1720.

Benjamin, born June 5th, 1725.
Silas, " January 30th, 1727.
Abigail, " November 23d, 1729.
Elkenah, " January 25th, 1732.
Minor, " March 5th, 1734.
Lydia, " March 20th, 1736.
Esther, " March 3d, 1738.
Mary, " September 10th, 1740.

John and Mary Sprague, according to the same Records, had seven children : —

Ebenezer, born December 12th, 1711.
Hannah, " June 30th, 1714.
Jonathan, " April 30th, 1716.
John, " July 22d, 1723.
Thomas, " May 8th, 1725.
Huldah, " April 15th, 1734.
Rachel, " August 19th, 1737.

Thomas Sprague, Esq., in his letter to Hon. Seth Sprague, * states that his grandfather, whose name was *Silas*, was born in Lebanon, Connecticut, January 3d, 1729. There can be but little doubt that he is the *Silas* mentioned in the list above given of the children of Benjamin Sprague, and that the true date of his birth is *January 30th*, 1727, as I have stated it on the authority of the Lebanon Records. It is easy to conceive how this date may have been changed by errors of transcribers to January 3d, 1729.

* The object of this letter was to ascertain the writer's relationship to the Duxbury branch of the Sprague family, by determining the name of his great-grandfather.

For further particulars in regard to this Silas Sprague and his descendants, I will take the liberty to quote from the letter of his grandson, above named.

"My grandfather," he says, "had two wives. By the first, Eunice Binney, he had seven children: — Barnabas, who died in 1751, Eunice, Barnabas, 2d, Hannah, Mary, Silas and Andrew. By his second wife, Abigail Hill, he had eight children: — *Roger*, Azel, Thomas, Sophia, Betsey, Betsey, 2d, Fanny and Aminty. My father, *Roger*, had also eight children, of whom I am the youngest. My grandfather had one brother by the name of William, and, my father thinks, another by the name of Elkenah. * My grandfather removed before the revolutionary war to Great Barrington, Mass., and afterwards to E. Bloomfield, Ontario Co., N. Y., where he died, September, 1808. My father removed, in August, 1822, to Oakland County, Michigan, where he now † resides."

C. Page 34.

There is in the Duxbury Records, under date of November 20th, 1714, a copy of an agreement between Moses Soule and Grace Sprague, widow, relict of William Sprague, and administratrix of his estate, in regard to twenty acres of woodland, formerly sold by Moses Soule to William Sprague, "whereon," it is stated, "said Grace now dwelleth." The document is signed by Moses Soule

* It will be seen that both these names occur in the list I have given of the children of Benjamin and Mary Sprague, as found in the Records of Lebanon.

† March 19th, 1847.

and Grace Sprague (her mark), and witnessed by Samuel Sprague and Jonathan Delanoe.

I find also in these Records a copy of an agreement, dated November 30th, 1723, between Christopher Wadsworth and Grace Sprague, widow, relict of William Sprague, concerning the division of North Hill, and lands in that vicinity.

North Hill is now in the possession of Hon. Seth Sprague, Jr., and was purchased by him at the auction sale of the property of the late Samuel A. Frazer.

NOTE VI. Page 16.

> Beside yon height, along this wood-girt bay,
> The exile's axe is heard at opening day;

The height referred to is *Captain's Hill* in Duxbury, so called in honor of the renowned Captain Miles Standish, whose property, with land adjacent, it once was, and whose residence was near the margin of its south-eastern slope, not far from the sea-shore. The site of his house and the spring from which he drew water have been identified, and are pointed out at the present day.*

---

* The town of Duxbury was probably so named by Standish after the family seat of his ancestors in England. He died in 1656. The house in which he lived was afterwards burnt, while occupied by his oldest son, Alexander. Evidences of the fire still exist on the spot; but at what date it took place is not certainly known. It is stated by Russell [*Guide to Plymouth*, Appendix

Captain's Hill is about one hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea, and forms part of a peninsula known as "*the Nook;*" which extends about half a mile in a south-easterly direction between Duxbury and Plymouth Bays.

The Hill is, in a manner, consecrated by the associations which connect it, directly, with the mem-

---

p. xii.] on the authority of Lewis Bradford, Esq., the aged and venerable Town Clerk of Plympton, that the Town Records of Duxbury were burned in this fire, — Alexander Standish being Town Clerk and in possession of the Records at the time. If this were the fact, we might suppose that the first entries in the existing Records would have been made by Alexander Standish. But, on the contrary, I find that *William Pabodie* made the first entries therein, as Town Clerk, in the year 1666; and that he held this office until 1684, from which date to 1694, it was filled by *Rhodolphus Thatcher*. In 1694 he was succeeded by *Alexander Standish*, who is not before mentioned as acting in that capacity, though at this time he must have been over sixty years of age. He was Town Clerk six years, — having been succeeded in 1700 by *John Wadsworth*, who held the post until his death in 1750, with the exception of the year 1709, 1710, when it was filled by *Samuel Sprague*.

There can be no doubt that Miles Standish's house, and the early Records of Duxbury were burnt as commonly reported — the latter, it would seem, about 1666 — but the probability is, from what I have just stated, that the Records were not in the possession of Alexander Standish at the time the house was burned. The Rev. Josiah Moore, of Duxbury, in a recent communication to me, writes thus, in allusion to the Church Records. "I am informed that they were burned, together with those of the Town, at a fire which occurred at Pembroke where at the time they were deposited."

ories of Standish, of Brewster, of Collier, and others of the Pilgrims, who took up their abode at its base or in its vicinity; and, incidentally, with the whole history of that heroic band of exiles, the principal scenes of whose toils and sufferings in their new-found home, are all visible from its summit. The view from this point would impress any observer as combining many of the elements of beauty; but in the heart of one who has pondered the history of our forefathers, and who, perchance, has a drop of Pilgrim blood in his veins, the sight awakens emotions of a higher nature, and inspires sentiments that invest the landscape with something of their own sanctity, making it all "holy ground."

Looking towards the east, the eye ranges over Massachusetts Bay, and occasionally, in a clear atmosphere, may catch a glimpse of Cape Cod, which stretches out its protecting arm as if to enfold a region of the globe peculiarly precious. Nearer, projecting in almost a straight course from the north-eastern angle of Duxbury, and continuous with the shore of Marshfield, may be seen a long and narrow line of beach — which forms a protecting barrier to Duxbury Bay against the ocean-storms — crowned by the Gurnet with its light-house and the sheltering crescent of Saquish. Nearly opposite to the Gurnet, on the other side of the entrance to the harbor, rises the blue summit of Manomet. Just within the Bay of Duxbury, and between Saquish and the Nook, lies Clark's Island, ever memorable as being the spot where a small company of the Pilgrims, sent out

from the Mayflower to explore the coast, sought shelter on a dark and stormy December night, and where their first Sabbath-worship on the soil of New England was offered.* And across the waters of the Bay, which washes the margin of the Hill on the South, stands out in bold relief against a background of pine-clad hills the far-famed village of Plymouth. Still following the circuit of forest on the south and west, the eye falls in succession upon the pleasant villages of Rocky-Nook, Kingston, and a part of Duxbury, until on turning again to the north-east, the observer has a delightful view of the other and more populous part of the latter village, extending towards him for nearly two miles along the shore of the Bay.

In justification of the epithet 'wood-girt,' as applied to the Bay at the time of the first settlements in Duxbury, it may be remarked, that the interval between the shore and the edge of the woodland will hardly average a mile at the present time; and there is good reason to suppose that when the Pilgrims arrived, this whole space was covered with forest trees. Clark's Island was certainly well wooded at that time. For Bradford and Winslow, in their Journal,† speak of "two fine islands in the bay, uninhabited, wherein are nothing but woods, oaks,

* See under D.

† This Journal has usually been known as "Mourt's Relation," — the name of G. Mourt being signed to the preface — but Dr. Young [Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 115,] for very satisfactory reasons ascribes it to Bradford and Winslow.

pines, walnuts, beeches, sassafras, and other trees which we know not." One of these islands must have been Clark's Island, and the other probably was Brown's Island, which, in its exposed situation, has since been gradually wasted away by "the peltings of the pitiless storm," and is now under water, forming a very dangerous shoal at the mouth of Plymouth harbor.*

One singular fact, in regard to the timber-land of this region, is stated in Bradford's "Topographical Description of Duxbury."† This author, writing in 1793, says that Samuel Alden,‡ who died in 1780, aged ninety-three, and of whom he had a distinct and perfect recollection,§ remembered the time when the *white pine* began to grow in Duxbury. This would carry the date of the first appearance here of the white pine to about the year 1700. But it will be observed, that Bradford and Winslow, in the passage cited above, mention "*pines*" among the trees that were growing at Clark's and Brown's Islands in 1620. These were probably of the variety known as the *pitch pine*, which is not injuriously affected by salt water, and which in many parts of Massachusetts is found nearer to the sea than any other pine. ||

* See under E.

† Hist. Coll. Vol. ii.

‡ Grandson of John Alden, who came in the Mayflower.

§ New England Biography, p. 26.

|| See Emerson's Report on the Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts; a very able work, recently published.

D. Page 48.

The Mayflower arrived at "Cape Harbor," now the harbor of Provincetown, on the 11th of November, 1620. She remained at anchor here until the 15th of December. In the meantime three expeditions were fitted out to explore the coast, with the view of selecting a suitable place to commence a settlement. The last of these, which consisted of Standish, Carver, Bradford, Winslow, and six others of the Pilgrims, together with eight of the ship's crew, making eighteen persons in all, left the Mayflower on the 6th of December, and on the fifth day afterwards, or on the eleventh,* landed at Plymouth, which they considered "a place very good for situation." †

On their way thither, as they were approaching Manomet Point, on the afternoon of the 8th, a severe storm of snow and rain, which began early in the day, had increased to such violence that their boat was in imminent danger of being wrecked. The rudder is broken in the heavy sea, and while they are pressing sail to gain the harbor, which the pilot, who has been in these regions before and pretends to be acquainted with the coast, assures them is close at hand, the mast also breaks into three pieces. By favor of a flood tide, however, and the help of oars, they run in be-

* The 21st of December, corresponding to the 11th of Old Style, is properly the Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, and not the 22d, which has hitherto been observed as such. See Budington's History of the First Church in Charlestown, p 182. Russell's Guide to Plymouth, p. 213.

† Young's Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 162.

tween the Gurnet and Brown's Island. But here the pilot discovers that he is in a strange place, and seems to lose all presence of mind, for he is about to run the boat "ashore in a cove* full of breakers, before the wind," when a sailor, who is steering with an oar, cries out to the rowers, "About with her, or we are cast away." The order is promptly obeyed, and "dark night growing upon them," they bear up for a "small rise of land," which, though it is "compassed about with many rocks," they reach by the favor of Heaven in "a place of sandy ground," where their shallop rides "safe and secure all that night." Some hesitate about going on shore, for fear there might be Indians in the place; but others are so wet and cold, that they determine to run that risk for the sake of a better chance of refreshing themselves. They accordingly land, and with much difficulty kindle a fire. After midnight the wind changes, it freezes hard, and those in the boat finally go on shore, giving over their fears at the sight of the cheerful flames; before which the whole company repose for the rest of the night in safety and comparative comfort. When morning dawns they discover that they are on an island. It is the last day of the week, and, concluding to remain here until the following Monday, they employ themselves in drying their clothes and putting their pieces in order, not forgetting to return thanks to God for their many deliverances. And on the same spot, the day after, "they keep their Christian Sabbath," — the fifth Sabbath they had religiously observed since their arrival at Cape

* New England's Memorial, p. 47. Morton, the author of this work, first published in 1669, states in a note that this "*Cove*" was between the Gurnet and Saquish.

Cod, but the first any of the Pilgrims had passed on shore. "Nothing," says Bancroft, "marks the character of the Pilgrims more fully than that they keep it sacredly, though every consideration demanded haste." *

The island, whose friendly shelter was thus providentially offered, and whose "dim woods" thus "rang to the anthems of the free," "was afterwards," as we are informed by their historian, "called Clark's Island, because Mr. Clark, the master's mate, first stepped on shore thereon." †

This island belongs to the township of Plymouth, and contains eighty-six and a quarter acres of good land. In the early days of the Colony, it was reserved for the poor of the town, who were allowed to take their wood and to pasture their cattle there. It was at that time covered with a rich growth of trees, principally of red cedar, three decaying trunks of which are at present the only remnants of its original forest. In 1690, the island was sold to Samuel Lucas, Elkanah Watson and George Morton. John Watson, Esq, — one of the founders of the Old Colony Club, and President of the Pilgrim Society for six years previous to his death in 1826, — resided here about forty years. His son, Mr. Edward Watson, is now the occupant of the island. ‡

Another interesting incident, connected with Clark's

---

* N. E. Memorial, p. 47. Young's Chron. of the Pil., 159. Bancroft's Hist. of U. States, Vol. i., pp. 312, 313. Prince's Annals, p. 167.

† New England's Memorial, p. 47.

‡ Young's Chron. of the Pilgrims, p. 160. Russell's Guide to Plymouth, p. 214.

Island, deserves to be mentioned. At the breaking out of Philip's war in 1675, the "praying Indians," as they were called — that is, those Indians who were supposed to have been converted to Christianity by the preaching of Eliot, the Mayhews, and others — shared the aversion and distrust that were felt on the part of the whites towards the Indians generally, and, moreover, were severely reproached by the adherents of Philip, and occasionally exposed to their revenge. In order to protect these converts from the fury of their hostile brethren, and doubtless also to secure their fidelity, it was thought best to isolate them as much as possible. The "praying Indians" of Natick, and other places in the Massachusetts Colony, were sent to Deer Island in Boston harbor, and a part of those in the jurisdiction of Plymouth, particularly those of Namassakesett, now Pembroke, were conveyed to Clark's Island, at the mouth of Duxbury Bay.* It is not stated how long they remained under this species of duress, but probably until the end of the war in 1677. The expedient might well have been applied to all the converted Indians; for King Philip's war "not only shook the faith of the common sort, but many that had been at the head of praying towns, the Indian ministers themselves, were found in arms against their white Christian neighbors." †

---

* N. E. Memorial, p. 410.

† Drake's Book of the Indians, p. 115, ninth ed.

E. Page 49.

Judge Davis * and Dr. Young † are of opinion that the shoal at the mouth of Plymouth Bay, called Brown's Island, was under water, as it now is, when the Pilgrims arrived. They draw this conclusion from a comparison of Governor Winthrop's and Secretary Morton's separate accounts of the wreck of two boats which took place on this spot, October 6th, 1635. These boats or shallops, laden with goods for Connecticut, were overtaken by an easterly storm, driven ashore, and their crews, consisting of five men, were drowned. Governor Winthrop, in alluding to this event, says that "the shallops were cast away on Brown's Island, near the Gurnet's Nose."

And Morton * remarks of the same disaster, that the boats "ran upon a skirt of a flat that lieth near the mouth of the harbor." "This," says Dr. Young, "seems conclusive of the point that Brown's Island was then under water;" and Judge Davis has a note to the same effect. The former, therefore, infers that one of the "two fine islands in the bay" must have been Saquish, "which," he says, "although a peninsula, very much resembles an island, and may very naturally have been mistaken for one; or at that time the water may have flowed across the narrow neck which now unites it with the Gurnet, and completely isolated it." The inference of the latter editor

---

* N. E. Memorial, p. 182.

† Chronicles of the Pilgrims, pp. 163, 164.

is, that one of the two islands must have been "Saquish, or the Gurnet, or both, as they are connected by a beach."

But some considerations have occurred to me — and with deference I will venture to state them here — favoring the opposite view, that an island, properly so called, existed on the site of Brown's Island Shoal at the time of the arrival of the Pilgrims, and was one of the two islands in the bay referred to in their early histories.

1. Why was the term *island* ever applied to this spot? If it had always been a shoal or a flat, as it now is, from the time it was first visited by Englishmen, it is difficult to assign a satisfactory reason why it should have been called an *island*. Besides, there is a very prevalent tradition that there was once an island in this place, and it is said that stumps of trees have been discovered here within less than a century. * Both the name and the tradition are facts which cannot well be accounted for, except on the supposition that there was an island, properly so called, on the site of this shoal at a period not very remote.

2. Why was it called *Brown's* Island? Russell, † who is of opinion that it was one of the "two islands" of the harbor referred to in the first histories of the Colony, says, "Its name was probably derived from Peter Brown, who came in the Mayflower." But he does not suggest any reason why that individual, rather than any other, should have had the honor or the good fortune to transmit his name, in this way, to after ages. Nevertheless, I think he is correct in the supposition; for, if I mistake not, there is

---

* N. E. Memorial, note, p. 48. Russell's Guide, p. 272.

† Guide to Plymouth, p. 272.

a passage in Bradford and Winslow's Journal which points very significantly to this individual, as the person after whom the island was named, and to the occasion of the preference. I refer to the account given in that Journal,* with respect to Peter Brown and John Goodman, who lost their way in the woods near Plymouth, January 12th, 1622, and after walking back and forth under a tree all night to keep themselves warm — for "it was an extreme cold night" — "travelled again, so soon as it was light, passing by many lakes and brooks and woods," until, "in the afternoon it pleased God from a high hill *they discovered the two isles in the bay*, and so that night got to the plantation, being ready to faint with travail and want of victuals, and almost famished with cold." This was an event which would be likely to be much talked about and long remembered; and what more probable than that, the name of one of the bewildered travellers, who might have been the first to descry the islands, should afterwards have been attached to that one of them which had hitherto been nameless? We have already seen that Clark's Island was so called after the mate of the Mayflower, who was the first to step ashore on it; and, most probably, it bore this name prior to the event above related.

3. As to the intimation that Saquish might have been mistaken for an island, or that it was actually surrounded by water at that time, it may be remarked, in the first place, that if the Pilgrims made a mistake on this point, it is hardly to be supposed that they would not very soon have discovered their error. But the two islands in the bay are twice referred to in Bradford and Winslow's

* Young's Chron. of the Pil., 174, 175, 176, 177.

Journal,* which was not published till 1622; so that, according to the intimation, these two historians, with every advantage of observation on the spot, must have remained for two years in ignorance of the fact, that Saquish was connected with the Gurnet by a neck of land. This is an inference too improbable to be admitted, and therefore we are compelled to believe that each of the islands referred to was actually an island, and that neither of them was mistaken for such.

In the second place, it is to be observed that there are no appearances now about the peninsula of Saquish, which give color to the supposition that the tide ever flowed between it and the Gurnet. And if this had been the case, the probability is that the breach would have been widened rather than filled up in the course of time. Besides, we have seen that Morton, who copied from Bradford, speaks of a "*cove*" between Saquish and the Gurnet, and of its being "full of breakers." This language certainly implies that there was a crescent-shaped and continuous neck joining these two places at that time, as there is at the present day.

4. The "*flat*," on the skirt or edge of which, according to Morton, the two boats were wrecked, might have been a shoal extending out from the island referred to in Winthrop's account. The former might have alluded to the *flat*, by way of defining the precise locality of the disaster; and the latter, speaking in more general terms, might have mentioned Brown's Island, in the neighborhood of which the accident happened, as the most conspicuous and best known landmark.

---

* Young's Chron. of the Pil., pp. 162, 177.

NOTE VII. Page 16.

That daughter! here my meagre strain obeys
A pious wish, and for a moment stays.

Allusion is here made to Hon. Seth Sprague's grandmother, who was descended from Francis Sprague. She was the daughter of William Sprague, grandson of Francis, and her name was *Zeruiah.** She was married, March 19th, 1724,† to Nathaniel Chandler, a descendant from Edmund Chandler, one of the Pilgrims who early settled at Duxbury, and a man, probably, of great respectability and influence, as his name is found in the list of representatives from that town to the General Court.‡ Her husband was by trade a shoemaker, and owned a small farm. His name appears three times upon the Duxbury Records, but not in connection with any official trust more important than that of surveyor of highways. He bore a high reputation for industry and integrity, but was not otherwise a man of marked character. In 1740, he was enlisted by General John Winslow to serve in the expedition against the Spanish West Indies under Admiral Vernon,§ in compliance with the summons of the mother country upon her colonies north of Carolina, to contribute four battalions to the

---

* See Note V.

† Duxbury Records.

‡ Hist. Coll., Vol. x., 2d series, Notes on Duxbury.

§ See under F.

armament. This expedition utterly failed in its objects, and proved eminently disastrous to the troops, of whom it is said that no less than three thousand four hundred and forty-five died of the prevailing fever of the tropics, in the short space of two days. Of five hundred men from Massachusetts, only fifty returned. * Mr. Chandler was one of those who fell victims to the climate. The precise date of his death is not known, but it must have occurred some time in the summer or fall of 1741.

He left his widow and seven daughters in rather destitute circumstances. But by great industry and economy she obtained a comfortable maintenance for her household, and gave her daughters an elementary education considered good and sufficient at that day; and, what is of far greater value than any training of the intellect, she disciplined her orphan charge, by example as well as by precept, to habits of virtue and piety. They were particularly instructed in all kinds of household duties, and taught to look upon the faithful discharge of those duties as peculiarly appropriate to the sphere of woman, and her most honorable distinction. In after life they knew how to appreciate the wisdom of their mother's lessons and practice, for they were all married and had families. Mrs. Chandler was a woman of strong, vigorous intellect, of warm affections, and of high religious faith, and she seems to have communicated

* Holmes's Annals, Vol. ii., p. 17.

these qualities to her offspring.* But neither of her daughters, probably, partook of their mother's excellencies in a greater degree than did she who became the mother of our Patriarch, and of whose character I shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent note.†

F. Page 58.

The expedition to the Spanish West Indies, referred to in Note VII., was undertaken in pursuance of the policy of the English government under the administration of Walpole — though this minister was opposed to it — to open a commerce with the colonies of Spain. "A war was desired," says Bancroft, ‡ "not because England insisted on cutting logwood in the Bay of Honduras, where Spain claimed a jurisdiction, and had founded no settlements; nor because the South Sea Company differed with the King of Spain as to the balances of their accounts; nor yet because the boundary between Carolina and Florida was still in dispute; — these differences could all have been adjusted; — but because English 'merchants were not permitted to smuggle with impunity.'"

"In an ill hour for herself," continues the same historian, "in a happy one for America, England declared war against Spain. § If the rightfulness of the European colo-

* I have drawn from letters and conversations of Hon. Seth Sprague, most of the materials for this notice of his grandparents.

† See Note XIV.

‡ Hist. of the U. States, Vol. iii., p. 435.

§ October 23d, 1739.

nial system be conceded, the declaration was a wanton invasion of it for immediate selfish purposes; but, in endeavoring to open the ports of Spanish America to the mercantile enterprise of her own people, England was also, though unconsciously, making war on monopoly, and advancing the cause of commercial freedom. The struggle was now, not for European conquests, or the balance of power, or religion, but for the opportunity of commerce with the colonies of Spain. That a great nation, like Spain, should be compelled by force of arms to admit a contraband trade with any part of its dominions, was an absurdity. England, therefore, could gain her purpose only by destroying the colonial system of Spain; and she began a career, which could not end till American colonies of her own, as well as of Spain, should obtain independence."

Encouraged by a successful attack on Porto Bello, under Edward Vernon, on the 21st and 22d of November, 1739, and the capture and destruction of Fort Chagre, on this side of the Isthmus of Darien, in the following year; "England," to follow still further the brilliant pages of Bancroft, "prepared to send to the West Indies by far the largest fleet and army that had ever appeared in the Gulf of Mexico, and summoned the colonies north of Carolina to contribute four battalions to the armament. No colony refused its quota; even Pennsylvania voted a contribution of money, and thus enabled its governor to enlist troops for the occasion. 'It will not be amiss,' wrote Sir Charles Wager to Admiral Vernon, 'for both French and Spaniards to be a month or two in the West Indies before us, that they may be half dead and half roasted, before our fleet arrives.' So the expedition from England did not begin

its voyage till October, and, after stopping for water at Dominica, where Lord Cathcart, the commander of the land forces, fell a victim to the climate, reached Jamaica in the early part of the following year.

"How has history been made the memorial of the passionate misdeeds of men of mediocrity! The death of Lord Cathcart left the command of the land forces with the inexperienced, irresolute Wentworth; the naval force was under the impetuous Vernon, who was impatient of contradiction, and ill disposed to endure even an associate. The enterprise, instead of having one good leader, had two bad ones.

"Wasting at Jamaica the time from the ninth of January, 1741, till near the end of the month, at last, with a fleet of twenty-nine ships of the line, beside about eighty smaller vessels, with fifteen thousand sailors, with twelve thousand land forces, equipped with all sorts of warlike instruments, and every kind of convenience, Vernon weighed anchor, without any definite purpose. Havana lay within three days' sail; its conquest would have made England supreme in the Gulf of Mexico. But Vernon insisted on searching for the fleet of the French and Spaniards; and the French had already left the fatal climate.

"The council of war, yielding to the vehement direction of Admiral Vernon, resolved to attack Carthagena, the strongest place in Spanish America. The fleet appeared before the town on the fourth of March, and lost five days in inactivity. Fifteen days were required to gain possession of the fortress that rose near the entrance to the harbor; the Spaniards themselves abandoned Castillo Grande. It remained to storm Fort San Lazaro, which commanded the town. The attack, devised without judg-

ment, was made by twelve hundred men with intrepidity; but the assailants were repulsed, with the loss of half their number, while the admiral gave no timely aid to the land forces; and discord aggravated defeat. Ere long, rains set in; the days were wet, the nights brilliant with vivid lightning. The fever of the low country in the tropics began its rapid work; men perished in crowds; the dead were cast into the sea, sometimes without winding sheet or sinkers; the hospital ships were crowded with miserable sufferers. In two days, the effective force on land dwindled from six thousand six hundred to three thousand two hundred.

"In July, an attack on Santiago, in Cuba, was meditated, and abandoned almost as soon as attempted.

"Such were the fruits of an expedition which was to have prepared the way for conquering Mexico and Peru. Of the recruits from the colonies, nine out of ten fell victims to the climate and the service. When the fleet returned to Jamaica, late in November, 1741, the entire loss of lives is estimated to have been about twenty thousand, of whom few fell by the enemy. Vernon attributed the failure to his own want of self-command. It is certain that nothing had been accomplished. . . . . England had made no acquisitions, and had inflicted on the Spanish West Indies far less evil than she herself had suffered." *

---

* *Mount Vernon*, the seat of GEORGE WASHINGTON, derived its name from Admiral Vernon. Lawrence Washington, the eldest brother of George, — and from whom the latter inherited this estate, — served in the expedition against the West Indies above referred to, and so far acquired the esteem and confidence of

NOTE VIII. Page 18.

Another of thy house — so may we call
The name, though no escutcheon decks the wall.

William Sprague, before alluded to in Note IV., and of whom a more particular account will be found in Note X.

NOTE IX. Page 18.

A later exile, found the friendly shore,
Where dwelt in peace the gentle Sagamore.

Sagamore was a term usually applied by the Indians to their Chiefs of second rank, the first in authority being called Sachem. But it was sometimes used as synonymous with the latter title.* The government of the aborigines being patriarchal, there might be several Sagamores in a tribe, though each tribe was subject to one Chief Sagamore or Sachem. These inferior chieftains were the great

---

General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon, that he afterwards kept up a friendly correspondence with them; and in compliment to the latter he gave the name of Mount Vernon to his seat on the Potomac River. [See Sparks' *Life of Washington*, pp. 10, 12]

* Hutchinson's Hist. of Mass. pp. 407, 408.

men or nobles of the tribe whom the Sachem consulted on important occasions.*

The Sagamore alluded to in the poem was WONAHAQUAHAM, who resided on Mystic river, near the site of the present town of Malden, and whose jurisdiction included Mishawum, now Charlestown, where William Sprague, with two of his brothers, first settled. He was called by the English *John Sagamore* or *Sagamore John*. Governor Dudley describes him as "a handsome young man,† . . . . conversant with us, affecting English apparel and houses, and speaking well of our God." And the Charlestown records state that he was "a man naturally of a gentle and good disposition," and gave "free consent" to the Spragues and their few associates to "settle about the Hill."‡ The other Sagamores in the neighborhood manifested similar friendly

---

* The Indians "were governed by Sachems, Kings, and Sagamores, petty lords." Lechford, cited by Lewis, Hist. of Lynn, p. 45.

† Wood says of the Indians; "They were more amiable to behold, though only in Adam's livery, than many a compounded fantastic in the newest fashion." And Lechford remarks; "The Indesses that are young are some of them very comely, having good features. Many prettie Brownettos and spider-fingered lasses may be seen among them." Cited by Lewis, Hist. of Lynn, p. 53.

‡ The Hill referred to is that on which the first Church now stands, between Main and Bow streets, near Charlestown square. This eminence was much higher at the time of the first settlement of the town than it now is. See Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 94.

feelings towards the English.* It is gratifying to know that this generous conduct was reciprocated on the part of the colonists; for in their after dealings with the Indians, they were careful to observe the strictest honor. Not a rood of land was appropriated without an equivalent to the original possessors; and when any injury was done to the property of the natives, through design or carelessness, the laws of the Colony enforced immediate satisfaction. Nor only so, but a considerate regard was paid to the peculiar tastes and time-hallowed associations of the red men, in leaving open to them, as of old, their favorite places of resort for fishing and hunting.†

Wonahaquaham, or *John Sagamore*, was the son of Nanepashemet, or the *New Moon*, the great Sachem of the Pawtuckets, whose dominion extended on the north of Charles River as far as Concord on the Merrimack, and as far east as Piscataqua, now Portsmouth. Nanepashemet lived at Lynn until the breaking out of the war of the Taratines, or Eastern Indians, against the western tribes in 1615.‡ He seems afterwards to have resided principally on the south side of Boston Bay, in Quincy or Dorchester, where he built a house, on the top of a hill, near to which, on the marsh, he constructed a fort. He

* Bradford's Hist. of Mass. p. 22.

† See Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 31; Budington, p. 37; also under G.

‡ Lewis's Hist. of Lynn, p. 47. See also under H.

built also another fortification on an eminence in the same neighborhood. To this last retreat he was pursued, and there killed in 1619, by his deadly enemies, the Taratines.* "The care," says Lewis† "which the great Moon Chief took to fortify himself, shows the fear which he felt for his mortal enemy. With his death the vengeance of the Taratines seems in some degree to have abated; and his sons returning to the shore, collected the scattered remnants of their tribes, over whom they ruled as Sagamores on the arrival of our fathers."

Nanepashemet left a widow, who as Squa Sachim, continued the government after his decease, three sons, and a daughter. His sons were *Wonohaquaham*, — the immediate subject of our notice — *Montowampate*, and *Wenepoyken;* the first, known to the English as Sagamore *John*, of Mistick, or Malden; the second, as Sagamore James, of Saugus, or Lynn; and the last, as Sagamore George, of Naumkeag, or Salem, who, after the death of his brothers and his mother, became Sachem of the Pawtuckets.‡

When the Spragues commenced their settlement at Charlestown in 1629, these Sagamores and their tribes seem to have had quite as much dread of their

---

* Young's Chron. Pil. p. 227.

† Hist. of Lynn, p. 47.

‡ Hist. of Lynn, by Lewis, who says further of Sagamore George; "He was the proprietor of Deer Island, which he sold to Boston. He was taken prisoner in the Wampanoag war in 1676, and died in 1684."

old enemies as they had before the death of Nanepashemet. And it is not improbable that the Colonists were indebted in part for the friendship of the Massachusetts Indians, to the fact that the latter supposed they should receive protection from the English against the Taratines. It is reported of the Massachusetts tribes, that "after the settlement of the country, they would fly to the houses of the English for a shelter from their fury; for the Taratines were accustomed yearly, at harvest, to come down in their canoes, and reap their fields, and carry away their corn, and destroy their people."*

In April and May, 1630, some of the Indians plotted a conspiracy to cut off the English of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Colonies. *Sagamore John*, on this occasion, gave a signal proof of his friendly disposition towards the English at Charlestown, by revealing to them this conspiracy in season to put them on their guard, and thus, with the terror inspired by "the report of the great guns at Salem, only shot off to clear them," completely frustrated the design of the hostile Indians.†

In 1631, the brothers John and James were at Agawam — now Ipswich — on a visit, when Masconomo, Sagamore of that place, was fiercely attacked in the night by a party of the Taratines.

---

* Planter's Plea, cited by Frothingham, Hist. of Charlestown, p. 33.

† Charlestown Records, in Young's Chron. of Mass. p. 378.

They were both wounded, and the wife of the latter was carried away captive. But this attack seems to have been a special act of vengeance against Masconomo, for having "treacherously killed some of the Tarateen families; and he was therefore less pitied of the English."*

Early in the following year, Sagamore John, with thirty of his men, accompanied Chikataubut, Sagamore of Neponset, on an expedition against the Pequots. This he did at the solicitation and in aid of Canonicus, Chief of the Narragansets. Governor Winthrop, in his Journal, under date of April, 1632, says, that "John Sagamore and Chikataubut were gone with all their men to Canonicus, who had sent for them."

In the latter part of 1633 a terrible pestilence, said to be the small-pox, broke out among the Massachusetts and Eastern Indians, by which great numbers of them perished.

"At this time," say the Charlestown records, "began a most grievous and terrible sickness amongst the Indians, who were exceedingly numerous about us, called the Aberginians.† Their disease was generally the small-pox, which raged not only

* Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 37. Felt's Hist. of Ipswich, p 3. Hubbard in Prince's Annals, p. 359.

† "The Abarginny men," says Edward Johnson, "consisted of the Massachusetts, Wippanaps, and Taratines." Young's Chron. Mass. p. 374. The true significance of this name appears not to have been determined.

amongst these, but amongst the Eastern Indians also, and in a few months, swept away multitudes of them, young and old. They could not bury their dead; the English were constrained to help; and that which is very remarkable is, that though the English did frequently visit them in their sickness, notwithstanding the infection, it was observed that not one Englishman was touched with the disease. But it was extremely infectious among themselves, and mortal where it took any of them."* The scourge was so dreadful, that, as Johnson says, "Relations were little regarded among them at this time, so that many who were smitten with disease died helpless, unless they were near and known to the English; their powows, wizards, and charmers, were possessed with the greatest fear of any. The winter's piercing cold stayed not the strength of this hot disease, yet the English endeavoring to visit their sick wigwams, helped them all they could, but as they entered one of their matted houses, they beheld a most sad spectacle, death having smitten all but one poor infant, which lay on the ground sucking the breast of its dead mother, seeking to draw living nourishment from her dead breast."†

Sagamore John and his brother James were among the victims of this pestilence; the former of whom died at Winisemet, now Chelsea, in December, 1633.

---

* Young's Chron. of Mass. p. 386.

† Wonder-working Providence, cited by Budington, p. 36.

His death is thus noticed in Winthrop's Journal: — "1633, Dec. 5. John Sagamore died of the small-pox, and almost all his people; about thirty buried by Mr. Maverick of Winisemet in one day. The towns in the bay took away many of the children, but most of them died soon after. James Sagamore, of Sagus, died also, and most of his folks. John Sagamore desired to be brought among the English. So he agreed and promised, if he recovered, to live with the English, and serve their God. He left one son, which he disposed to Mr. Wilson, the pastor of Boston, to be brought up by him. He gave the Governor a good quantity of wampampeague, and to divers others of the English he gave gifts, and took order for the payment of his own debts and his men's. He died in a persuasion that he should go to the Englishmen's God. Divers of them in their sickness confessed that the Englishmen's God was a good God, and that if they recovered they would serve him. It wrought much with them, that when their own people forsook them, yet the English came daily and ministered to them, and yet few took any instructions by it. Among others, Mr. Maverick,* of Winisemet, is worthy of special remembrance;

* There were two persons of this name in the Colony at this date; Rev. John Maverick, who was one of the first settlers of Dorchester in 1630; and Samuel Maverick, the date of whose arrival is not known, but who was residing at Noddle's Island, now East Boston, when the settlement at Charlestown was commenced. It is to the latter that Gov. Winthrop refers. He is

himself, his wife, and servants went daily to them, ministered to their necessities, and buried their dead, and took home many of their children. So did other of the neighbors. This infectious disease spread to Piscataqua, where all the Indians except one or two died."

The history of this "poor Indian" is in itself so interesting, especially to the descendants of ancestors who knew him and respected him for many acts of kindness, that I will add one more affecting notice of the good Sagamore, and of his last moments, by the author of "New England's First Fruits."*

"Sagamore John, prince of Massaquesers, was from our very first landing more corteous, ingenious, and to the English, more loving than others of them; he desired to learne and speake our language, and loved to imitate us in our behaviour and apparrell, and began to hearken after our God, and his wayes, and would much commend English men, and their God, saying, much good men, much good God, and

---

said to have been a man of great hospitality, "giving entertainment to all comers gratis." The General Court of the Colony granted to him Noddle's Island and Winisemet Ferry, on condition of his paying to the Governor for the time being, "either a fat wether, a fat hog, or £10 in money," and with the reservation of the right to Boston and Charlestown, "to fetch wood continually, as their need requires, from the southern part of the island." Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 40.

* See Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 37.

being convinced that our condition and wages were better farre than theirs, did resolve and promise to leave the Indians, and come live with us; but yet kept down by feare of the scoffes of the Indians, had not power to make good his purpose: yet went on not without some trouble of mind, and secret plucks of conscience, as the sequel declares; for being struck with death, fearfully cried out of himselfe that he had not come to live with us, to have knowne our God better; 'But now, (said he,) I must die, the God of the English is much angry with me and will destroy me; ah, I was afraid of the scoffes of the wicked Indians; yet my child shall live with the English, and learne to know their God when I am dead; ile give him to Mr. Wilson, he is a much good man, and much loved me;' so sent for Mr. Wilson to come to him, and committed his only child to his care, and so died."

G. Page 66.

The instructions of the Massachusetts Company to Governor Endicott and his Council were very explicit in regard to the proper line of conduct to be observed by the Colonists in dealing with the Indians.

"If any of the salvages," say the Company in their first letter, "pretend right of inheritance to all or any part of the lands granted in our patent, we pray you endeavor to purchase their title, that we may avoid the least scruple of intrusion." And in their second letter they hold this

language : — " Herewith you shall receive a copy [of the first letter] desiring you to take especial care of the performance and putting in execution of all things material therein mentioned, and particularly, amongst others, that point concerning publication to be made that no wrong or injury be offered by any of our people to the natives there. To which purpose we desire you, the Governor, to advise with the Council in penning of an effectual edict, upon penalty to be inflicted upon such as shall transgress the same ; which being done, our desire is, the same may be published, to the end that all men may take notice thereof, as also that you send a copy thereof unto us by the next return of ships." Not satisfied with this, they recur again to the subject in the course of the same letter, as follows : — " Whereas in our last we advised you to make composition with such of the salvages as did pretend any title or lay claim to any of the land within the territories granted to us by his Majesty's charter, we pray you now be careful and discover and find out all such pretenders, and by advice of the Council there to make such reasonable composition with them as may free us and yourselves from any scruple of intrusion ; and to this purpose, if it might be conveniently done, to compound and conclude with them all, or as many as you can, at one time, not doubting but by your discreet ordering of this business, the natives will be willing to treat and compound with you upon very easy conditions." *

The founders of the Plymouth Colony were equally scrupulous to observe good faith with the Indians in respect to land titles. Governor Josiah Winslow, in a public

* Young's Chron. of Mass., pp. 159, 172, 176.

document issued in 1675, says, "that no lands there had been taken up, but by purchase and consent of the natives who claimed them."

H. Page 66.

Lewis, in that excellent work, the History of Lynn, has given so clear, and, at the same time, so concise an account of the various tribes of Indians in New England at the period of the first English settlements here, — and of that "hardy and warlike people," * the Taratines, especially, — that I am tempted to quote largely from his interesting pages. †

"There appear," says this historian, "to have been as many as seven nations in New England. The ever-warring Taratines inhabited the eastern part of Maine, beyond the Penobscot river, and their great Sachem was Nultonamit. From the Penobscot to the Pascataqua were the Chur-Churs, formerly governed by a mighty chief, called a Bashaba. The Pawtuckets had a great dominion, reaching from the Pascataqua to the river Charles, and extending north as far as Concord, on the Merrimac. Their name is preserved in Pawtucket Falls, at Lowell. They were governed by Nanepashemet, who sometimes resided at Lynn; and according to Gookin, could raise three thousand warriors. The Massachusetts, so named from

---

* Gorges, cited by Frothingham. Hist. of Charlestown, p. 33.

† See pp. 45, 46.

the Blue Hills at Milton,* were governed by Chickataubut, who also commanded three thousand men. His dominion was bounded on the north and west by Charles River, and on the south extended to Weymouth and Canton. The Wamapanoags occupied the south-eastern part of Massachusetts, from Cape Cod to Narraganset Bay. They were ruled by Massasoit, whose chief residence was at Pokanoket, now Bristol, in Rhode Island. He was a Sachem of great power, having dominion over thirty-two tribes, and could have brought three thousand warriors into the field by a word; yet he was a man of peace, and a friend to the English, and during all the provocations and disturbances of that early period, he governed his nation in tranquillity for more than forty years, leaving an example of wisdom to future ages. The Narragensets, on the west of Narraganset Bay, in Rhode Island, numbered five thousand warriors, and were governed by two Sachems, Canonicus, and his nephew, Miantonomo, who ruled together in harmony. The Pequots occupied Connecticut, and were governed by Sassacus, a name of terror, who commanded four thousand fighting men, and whose residence was at New London. Beside this there were the Nipmucks, in the interior of Massachusetts, who had no great Sachem, but united with the other nations in their wars according to their inclination. The Pequots and the Taratines were ever at war with some of the other nations, and were the Goths and Vandals of New England.

"The Indians were very numerous, until they were

* Cotton, in his Vocabulary of the Massachusetts language, gives the following definition: "Mâssa-chusett — a hill in the form of an arrow's head." See Young's Chron. of Plym., p 224.

reduced by a great war and by a devastating sickness. All the early voyagers speak of 'multitudes' and 'countless multitudes.' Smith, who took his survey in 1614, passing along the shore in a little boat, says, 'The seacoast as you pass, shows you all along, large corne fields, and great troupes of well proportioned people;' and adds, that there were three thousand on the islands in Boston harbor. Gookin has enumerated eighteen thousand warriors in five nations, and if the remainder were as populous, there must have been twenty-five thousand fighting men, and at least one hundred thousand people in New England. In the spring of 1615, some provocation was given by the western Indians to the Taratines, who, with a vindictive spirit, resolved upon retaliation; and they carried their revenge to an extent scarcely paralleled in the dreadful history of human warfare. They killed the great Bashaba of Penobscot, murdered his women and children, and overran the whole country from Penobscot to the Blue Hills. Their death word was Cram! Cram! — kill! kill — and so effectually did they 'suit the action to the word,' and so many thousand did they slaughter, that, as Gorges says, it was 'horrible to be spoken of!' In 1617, commenced a great sickness, which some have supposed was the plague, others the small-pox, or yellow fever; but I have no doubt it arose from the putrefaction of the unburied dead. This sickness made such dreadful devastation among those whom the tomahawk had not reached, that when the English arrived, the land was literally covered with human bones. Still the vengeance of the Taratines was unsatiated, and we find them hunting for the lives of the few Sagamores who remained!"

NOTE X. Page 18.

The stranger was the youngest in a triple band,
That parting sad from Albion's southern strand,
Thrice must repeat the long and last farewell,
As fade the scenes where home's loved inmates dwell.

William Sprague was the youngest of three brothers, — Ralph, Richard, and William, — who arrived at Salem in 1629,* and in the summer of that year, removed to Charlestown, then called Mishawum by the natives, where they with a few others were the first to form an English settlement.†

William Sprague was also the youngest of the family of Edward Sprague, who resided at Upway, in the County of Dorset, England, and who died there in October, 1614, leaving six children, and a widow named Christian. I have intimated in the last two lines above quoted from the poem, that three of this family — referring to two brothers and

---

* See under I.

† They found at Mishawum one solitary English abode, the "palisadoed and thatched house" of Thomas Walford, a smith. How or when he came there is not known. There is the same mystery in regard to Blackstone, Maverick, and Thompson, each of whom at this period, was leading the same hermit-like life; the first at Shawmut or Boston, the second at Noddle's Island, now East Boston, and the last on another island in Boston harbor, since known by his name as Thompson's Island. See Charlestown Records; Savage's Winthrop, vol. i. p. 53; Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, pp. 23, 24, 40, 45.

a sister — were living in England on the family estate, when the three other brothers emigrated to this country. There is, however, no positive evidence on this point.*

These brothers and their associates made their journey from Salem to Mishawum "through the woods;" and at that period, "all the country round about was an uncouth wilderness." Mishawum was "a neck of land" lying on the north side of Charles River, "generally full of stately timber," and "full of Indians." † The good Sagamore, of whom some account has been given in the preceding note, extended a hearty welcome to the adventurers; and they proceeded not long afterwards, under the direction of Mr. Graves, a skilful engineer in the service of the Massachusetts company, "to model and lay out the form of the town with streets about the Hill." Ere long the work of building was commenced. But their habitations, probably, were little more than rude booths; for early in the summer of the following year, 1630, when Roger Clap arrived at Charlestown, he found, as he says, only "some wigwams and one house." ‡ He dignified with the latter title, it is presumed, what was called the "Great house," which Mr. Graves and his work-

---

* See under J.

† The mouth of Charles River was the common rendezvous of the Indians in this region. Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 32.

‡ Roger Clap's Memoirs in Young's Chron. of Mass. p. 349.

men had been busily engaged in erecting and preparing for the reception of Governor Winthrop, who was shortly expected.

Winthrop arrived at Salem in June, 1630. He "found the Colony in a sad and unexpected condition."* No less than eighty had died during the winter, and those that survived could hardly procure the means of subsistence, "all the corn and bread amongst them all (being) hardly sufficient to feed them a fortnight."

In July following the Governor removed to Charlestown, where he "and several of the patentees dwelt in the *Great house* last year built by Mr. Graves." The colonists here were in the same condition as those at Salem. They had suffered exceedingly during the winter, and in the spring the Indians "all round about," had entered into a conspiracy to cut them off in common with all the English in New England. But the faithful John Sagamore revealed the plot to his new friends at Charlestown; and the whole strength of the little band was immediately put in requisition to provide some means of defence and security. "All hands, of men, women, and children, wrought at digging and building," † until a fort was completed on the Town Hill. But the "great guns at Salem" struck terror into the hearts of the natives; and "all their companies scattered

* Dudley's letter to the Countess of Lincoln, in Young's Chron. of Mass. p. 311.

† Charlestown Records.

and ran away." The warning, however, was not lost upon the Colonists, for they felt themselves "constrained by their conspiracies to be yearly in arms."

Many of Winthrop's company who came to Charlestown, were sick with scurvy on their arrival, and other distempers soon broke out among them; so that "the whole were not able to tend the sick, as they should be tended, upon which many perished, and were buried about the Town Hill."* In addition to the terrors of pestilence, famine threatened to destroy them. "Oh, the hunger that many suffered," says Roger Clap, "and saw no hope in an eye of reason to be supplied, only by clams, muscles, and fish!" And another witness states, that "almost in every family, lamentation, mourning, and woe were heard, and no fresh food to cherish them."† Nevertheless, they "went on with their work for

---

* Human bones have been dug up in various places upon this Hill. Some were found here so recently as 1845, in digging a cellar for some stores in the square. They were undoubtedly the remains of persons who perished at the period referred to in the text. See Frothingham, p. 48.

† "In their extremities 't was marvellous to see how helpful these good people were to one another, following the example of their most liberal governor, Winthrop, who made an equal distribution of what he had in his own stores among the poor, *taking no thought for the morrow*. And how content they were! when an honest man, as I have heard, inviting his friends to a dish of *clams*, at the table gave thanks to Heaven, who *had given them to suck the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sands!*" Mather's Magnalia, vol. i. p. 72.

settling." "In order to which," — mark what these founders of a new State considered to be the chief corner-stone of their edifice, — "they, with Mr. John Wilson, one of the ministers, did gather a church, and chose the said Mr. Wilson pastor." Their "meeting-place," says Clap, "was abroad under a tree, where I have heard Mr. Wilson and Mr. Phillips preach many a good sermon." Well might this honest and pious chronicler add, in writing to those who in aftertimes had entered into the fruits of so great toils and sufferings, — "In those days God did cause his people to trust in him, and to be contented with mean things. You have better food and raiment than was in former times, but have you better hearts than your forefathers had?"

Of such scenes of hardship in the early settlement of New England, Ralph Sprague, and his brothers, Richard and William, were frequent witnesses, and in most of the distresses of the times, doubtless, they deeply participated. It is to be regretted that so little record is left of their individual history. Enough is known, however, to justify fully the remark of President Everett, that "they were persons of character, substance, and enterprise; excellent citizens, and generous public benefactors." *

Ralph Sprague was the oldest of these brothers, and the oldest of the family. He was probably about twenty-nine years of age at the time he emi-

* Orations, p. 210.

grated.* According to the Massachusetts Colony Records, he took the freeman's oath in May, 1630, and was appointed Constable of Charlestown in October following. His name and that of his wife, Joanna, are found in the list of members of the first church, as among those "who did enter into the covenant first" in 1632.† I find his name first mentioned in the Charlestown Records under date of April, 18th, 1634, when he was commissioned, with two others, to advocate certain interests of the town before the General Court. February 10th, 1635, he was chosen selectman; and afterwards he was frequently elected to that office. In November, 1636, he was for the first time chosen representative to the General Court. He filled this important post, subsequently, at seven different times. He was styled *Sergeant* in the Records in 1635, and *Lieutenant* in 1637, and ever afterwards. In the last named year he was a member of the Boston Artillery Company. In 1639 the General Court granted him one hundred acres of

---

* I conclude that he was not far from twenty-nine years old at this date, from the fact stated by Budington, (Hist. of First Church, p. 33,) that Ralph's brother Richard died in 1688, at the age of sixty-three. It follows that his age in 1629 was twenty-four, and he being the fourth child of the family — as is shown by his father's *will*, of which a copy will be found in this volume under J., — must have been at least five years younger than Ralph; and hence the latter could not have been under twenty-nine years old at the date referred to.

† Budington's Hist. of the First Church, p. 184. Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 70.

land, "having borne difficulties in the beginning." His name appears in the Records for the last time under date of January 1st, 1649, when he is mentioned as being one of a commission to settle the bounds between Mystic and Charlestown. "He was," says Frothingham,* "a prominent and valuable citizen, active in promoting the welfare of the town and of the colony." He died in 1650; leaving a widow, Joanna,—who afterwards married Edward Converse, and died about November, 1680;—four sons, *John* and *Richard*, born in England, *Samuel*, born in 1631, and *Phineas*. He left also a daughter, *Mary*, who married Daniel Edmands.†

Richard Sprague was the third son and fourth child of Edward Sprague, above-named, and was twenty-four years old when he came to New England in 1629. He took the freeman's oath with his brother Ralph, in May, 1630. In 1632 he and his wife, Mary, subscribed the church covenant. He was for several years one of the selectmen of Charlestown, and a representative from 1659 to 1666. In the Records, the titles of *Ensign*, *Lieutenant*, and *Captain*, are applied to him at different times. He is known to have been a member of the Artillery Company of Boston, and Captain of the Charlestown Military Company. From this and from the affection he seems to have entertained for his sword,

---

* Hist. of Charlestown, p. 21.

† See under K.

which he bequeathed to his brother William, of Hingham, it may be inferred that he had more of a military turn than either of his brothers. He died November 25th, 1668, at the age of sixty-three.* His estate was valued at £2357 16*s.* 8*d.* of which £600 were in money. He bequeathed to Harvard College thirty-one sheep and thirty lambs, and to the First Church of Charlestown £30 in value. His wharf and warehouse, with other property, he bequeathed to his nephew, Richard, son of Ralph. But he gave the largest portion of his estate to his widow Mary, who died in 1674. He left no children.†

William Sprague, as has been already stated, was the youngest of the three brothers, and the youngest of the family. He was probably not far from twenty years of age when he came to this country. He remained in Charlestown with his brothers until 1636, when he removed to Hingham, in company with his father-in-law,‡ Anthony Eames. This appears from a comparison of the Charlestown and

---

* See Budington's Hist. of the First Church, p. 33.

† Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, p. 22.

‡ The fact of their relationship, as stated, I have satisfactorily ascertained. The two following literal extracts from the Hingham Records put it beyond all question. The first refers to a portion of the "Salt Marsh at Lawford's Liking," and the other to a part of the "first meadow in the playne."

"June 12, 1637. William Sprague is to have two acres and halfe of marsh next to Anthony Eames his father lawe to the

Hingham Records, in the former of which the names of William Sprague and Anthony Eames are found for the last time in the list of inhabitants, under date of January, 1636; and in the latter these same individuals are mentioned for the first time, in the same year, and in immediate proximity to each other, as proprietors of lands granted to them by the town of Hingham.

By the "catalogue of admissions to full communion," as published in Budington's *History of the First Church of Charlestown*,* it is shown that Millicent Sprague was admitted a member of this Church, April 3d, 1635. Further, the baptismal record of this Church contains the following entry under date of "1636, 3d mo: day 23," or the 23d of May, 1636.

"Anthony Sprague, the son of William Sprague and of Millicent his wife, was Baptised."†

From these facts, therefore, it may be inferred that William Sprague married Millicent Eames early in 1635, and that his removal to Hingham took place in the summer of 1636, when he was about twenty-

---

eastward by the same river, and is to have it be more or less as it is measured."

"June 12, 1637. William Sprague is to have one acre next to Anthony Eames his father law to the southward by the same river be it more or less as it is measured."

* P. 247.

† I am indebted for the transcript of this, and other entries in the Records of the first Church, to Rev. Mr. Budington, who kindly communicated them to me by letter.

seven years old. Ten years afterwards, in January, 1646, he was chosen one of the seven selectmen "to order the prudential affairs of the town." So far as I can learn, he held this office only for that year; though he seems to have been subsequently employed — the last time as late as 1672 — on important agencies in behalf of the selectmen, as mention is made of debts due to him from that board, "for his journey to Marshfield" and "for his journey to Plymouth," &c. In 1662 he was constable of Hingham and collector of the town-rates. And at other times he had public duties assigned to him, from the nature of which it is plain that he was held in honor and esteem by his fellow-townsmen, as a man of intelligence and strict integrity. It appears from his *Will*,* that he was possessed of a large landed estate, and a competency of personal property. He died October 26th, 1675, at about the age of sixty-six. His wife Millicent, or Mellesaint, survived him till February 8th, 1696. They had eleven children,† of whom eight were living at the time of their father's death.

---

* See under L. The fac-similes of William Sprague's autograph, and of his wife's mark, in acknowledgment of her name, are given in Fig. 3, of the folded plate. They were taken from their signatures to an Old Deed, dated February 21st, 1673, now in the possession of Leavitt Sprague, Esq., of Hingham, to whom I am greatly indebted for the loan of that document, as well as for other favors having reference to the objects of this volume.

† See under M.

I. Page 78.

It has been commonly supposed that Ralph, Richard, and William Sprague came over with Endicott, who arrived at Salem, September 6th, 1628. But President Everett * and Dr. Young † are inclined to the opinion — and, as I think, with sufficient reason — that these brothers were not of Endicott's company. The latter suggests, as more probable, that they came the next year in the fleet which brought Higginson, Graves and Bright. The evidence, so far as it goes, certainly favors this view. The only direct authority on the point at issue, is to be found in the Charlestown Records, the following extract from the introductory pages of which, embraces all that may have a bearing on the question. ‡

---

* Orations, pp. 210, 211.

† Chron. Mass. pp. 31, 152.

‡ The earliest Records of Charlestown, up to 1662, were copied by John Greene in 1664, from original documents not now extant. The first volume of these Records opens with an introduction relating chiefly to the history of the early settlements in New England, "most whereof," say the selectmen in an order approving this introduction, "is gathered by information of known gentlemen that lived and were actors in those times." It is, then, merely a digest from the traditions of the times, prepared more than thirty years after the events therein recorded took place. Errors in dates would be very likely to creep into such a document — as it appears they have into this — but for the main facts and the general sequence of events, its authority perhaps is sufficient. I take the extract in the text from Young's Chronicles of Massachusetts, where the introductory part of the Charlestown Records may be found entire; pp. 371 – 387. See also Frothingham, pp. 2, 12; and Budington, pp. 171 – 174.

"Captain John Smith, having (in the reign of our sovereign lord, James, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith,) made a discovery of some parts of America, lighted, amongst other places, upon the opening betwixt Cape Cod and Cape Ann, situate and lying in 315 degrees of longitude, and 42 degrees 20 minutes of north latitude; where, by sounding and making up, he fell in amongst the islands, and advanced up into Massachusetts Bay, till he came up into the river between *Mishawum* (afterwards called Charlestown) and *Shawmutt* (afterwards called Boston;) and having made discovery of the land, rivers, coves, and creeks in the said Bay, and also taken some observations of the natures, dispositions, and sundry customs of the numerous Indians, or natives, inhabiting the same, he returned to England;* where it was reported, that upon his arrival, he presented a map of the Massachusetts Bay to the King, and that the Prince (afterwards King Charles the First) upon inquiry and perusal of the aforesaid river, and the situation thereof upon the map, appointed it to be called Charles river.

"Now upon the fame that went abroad of the place, both in England and Holland, several persons of quality sent over some at their own cost, who planted this country in several parts; but for want of judgment, care, and

* "Captain Smith, in the summer of 1614, ranged along the coast of New England, in a small boat, with eight or nine men, from the Penobscot to Cape Cod, and in 1616 published his description of New England, which is reprinted in Mass. Hist. Coll., xxvi. 95 - 140. The map is prefixed to vol. xxiii. of the same collections." — Young.

orderly living, divers died. Others, meeting with many hazards, hardships, and wants, at length being reduced to great penury and extremity, were so tired out, that they took all opportunities of returning to England; upon which several places were altogether deserted, and left.* Only some few that, upon a better principle, transported themselves from England and Holland, came and settled their plantation a little within Cape Cod, and called the same Plymouth, notwithstanding all their wants, hazards, and sufferings, continued several years in a manner alone; at which time this country was generally called by the name of New England.

"At length, divers gentlemen and merchants of London obtained a patent and charter for the Massachusetts Bay, from our sovereign lord King Charles the First, gave invitation to [such] as would transport themselves from Old England to New England to go and possess the same; and for their encouragement, the said patentees, at their own cost, sent over a company of servants under the government of Mr. John Endicott; who, arriving within this Bay, settled the first Plantation of this jurisdiction, called Salem; under whose wing there were a few also that [did] settle and plant up and down, scattering in several places of the Bay; where, though they met with the dangers, difficulties, and [wants] attending new plantations in a

* "These abortive attempts to plant colonies in New England, were, (1.) The Plymouth Company's, in 1607, near the mouth of the Kennebec; (2.) Weston's, at Wessagusset, (Weymouth) in 1622; (3.) Robert Gorges', at the same place, in 1623; (4.) David Thomson's, at the mouth of the Piscataqua in 1623; and (5.) Captain Wollaston's, at Quincy, in 1625." — Young's Chron. Mass. p. 21.

solitary wilderness, and so far remote from their native country, yet were they not long without company; for in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-eight, came over from England several people at their own charge, and arrived at Salem. After which, people came over yearly in great numbers; in [torn off] years many hundreds arrived, and settled not only in Massachusetts Bay, but did suddenly spread themselves into other colonies also.

"Amongst others that arrived at Salem at their own cost, were Ralph Sprague, with his brethren, Richard and William, who, with three or four more, by joint consent and approbation of Mr. John Endicott, Governor, did, the same summer of anno 1628, undertake a journey from Salem, and travelled the woods above twelve miles to the westward, and lighted of a place situate and lying on the north side of Charles river, full of Indians, called Aberginians. Their old Sachem being dead, his eldest son, by the English called John Sagamore, was their chief, and a man naturally of a gentle and good disposition; by whose free consent they settled about the hill of the same place, by the said natives called Mishawum; where they found but one English palisadoed and thatched house, wherein lived Thomas Walford, a smith, situate on the south end of the westernmost hill of the East Field, a little way up from Charles river's side; and upon surveying, they found it was a neck of land, generally full of stately timber, as was the main, and the land lying on the east side of the river called Mistick river (from the farm Mr. Craddock's servants had planted, called Mistick, which this river led up unto;) and indeed generally all the country round about was an uncouth wilderness, full of timber.

"The inhabitants that first settled in this place, and brought it into the denomination of an English town, were in anno 1628 as follows, viz.: Ralph Sprague; Richard Sprague; William Sprague; John Meech; Simon Hoyte; Abraham Palmer; Walter Palmer; Nicholas Stowers; John Stickline; Thomas Walford, smith, that lived here alone before; Mr. [blank] Graves, who had charge of some of the servants of the Company of Patentees, with whom he built the great house this year, for such of the said Company as are shortly to come over, which afterwards became the meeting-house; and Mr. [blank] Bright, minister to the Company's servants.

"By whom it was jointly agreed and concluded, that this place on the north side of Charles river, by the natives called Mishawum, shall henceforth, from the name of the river, be called Charlestown; which was also confirmed by Mr. Endicott, Governor.

"It is jointly agreed and concluded by the inhabitants of this town, that Mr. [blank] Graves do model and lay out the form of the town, with streets about the Hill; which was accordingly done and approved of by the Governor.

"It is jointly agreed and concluded, that each inhabitant have a two acre lot to plant upon, and all to fence in common; which was accordingly by Mr. [blank] Graves measured out unto them.

"Upon which, Ralph Sprague and others began to build their houses and to prepare fencing for their lots, which was afterwards set up almost in a semi-circular * form on the south and south-east side of that field laid out

* "Hence the street on which these houses were built is called Bow street."— Young.

to them, which lies situate on the north-west side of the Town Hill.

"Walter Palmer, and one or two more shortly after began to build in a straight line upon their two acre lots on the east side of the Town Hill, and set up a slight fence in common, that ran up to Thomas Walford's fence; and this was the beginning of the East Field.

"In the months of June and July, 1629, arrived at this town, John Winthrop, Esq., Governor, Sir Richard Saltonstall, Knight, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Dudley, Mr. Ludlow, Mr. Nowell, Mr. Pincheon, Mr. Broadstreet; who brought along with them the charter or patent for this jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Bay; with them also arrived Mr. John Wilson and Mr. [blank] Phillips, ministers, and a multitude of people, amounting to about fifteen hundred, brought over from England in twelve ships. The Governor and several of the Patentees dwelt in the great house, which was last year built in this town by Mr. Graves and the rest of their servants."

The first remark to be made in regard to this extract is, that the date of Winthrop's arrival, as stated in the last paragraph, is clearly erroneous. Every other authority assigning 1630 as the true date of that event.* The statement, too, that Mr. Graves and Mr. Bright were among the inhabitants of Charlestown in 1628, is incorrect, it being well established that they did not come to New England before June, 1629.† Now these errors being

---

* See the Company's Records in Young's Chron. of Mass., and Prince.

† See Frothingham, pp. 18, 19; Prince, p. 261; Young's Chron. of Mass. pp. 53, 56–59, 144, 152, 216.

apparent and admitted, the presumption is, that the date previously assigned in this record for the arrival of the Spragues, and their journey from Salem to Charlestown should have been 1629 instead of 1628. Other considerations confirm this supposition.

The record, it will be observed, says expressly that those who came with Endicott came *at the cost of the patentees.* But it also states, quite as explicitly, that the Spragues came *at their own cost.* * It follows that they were not of Endicott's company.

And the order in which events are mentioned in the record indicates clearly that the arrival of these brothers was subsequent to that of Endicott. It is said first, that "under his wing, there were a few that settle and plant up and down scattering in several places of the Bay," and, then, that all these "met with dangers and difficulties," but that "they were not long without company," "for," as the account goes on to say, "several other people came over from England *at their own charge*, and arrived at Salem." And immediately afterwards it is asserted, that "amongst others that arrived at Salem *at their own cost*, were Ralph Sprague, with his brethren Richard and William." It is a fair inference, certainly, from the sequence of these passages, that the Spragues

* In the Company's second letter to Endicott, mention is made of a class of settlers who were "no adventurers, coming in person at their own charge." That is, they took no share, or *adventured* nothing in the Company's stock; nor were they in the service of any of the stockholders, but came over in the Company's ships at their own risk and expense. Chron. of Mass. p. 174.

were neither of Endicott's company, nor of those who "under his wing" were the first to "settle and plant in several places of the Bay;" but that they were among those who came over afterwards.

The Abigail, which brought the emigrants under Endicott, was the only vessel sent over by the Massachusetts Company in 1628. So that, as Frothingham has remarked,* if the Spragues did not come with Endicott, and unless they came in a private vessel — which I think is not probable — they could not have arrived in this country before June or July, 1629. In the spring of the last-named year, no less then six vessels were despatched by the Company with emigrants.† The first of these that arrived was the George (June 22d,) which set sail before the rest, "having some special and urgent cause of hastening her passage." This vessel was thus hastened, because she carried a letter of instruction from the Company to Endicott, in which he is urged to "send forty or fifty persons to Massachusetts Bay‡ to inhabit there," and earnestly entreated "not to protract, but to do it with all speed." The object of the Company was to anticipate Oldham in the settlement of this territory, which he claimed through a lease from John Gorges.

Endicott, of course, when this letter reached him would have complied immediately with its directions. But on the

---

* Hist. of Charlestown, p. 14.

† Chron. of Mass. p. 154.

‡ By "Massachusetts Bay," was understood at that time only the territory bordering on Boston harbor, from Nahant to Point Alderton, Naumkeag was not included in it. Young, note to the Company's letter, in Chron of Mass. p. 150.

supposition of the correctness of the statement in the Charlestown Records, that the settlement of that place was commenced in 1628, it is difficult to assign a satisfactory reason for the undertaking at that early date. Endicott did not arrive till the middle of September ;* and it is not probable that any of his company would have looked further, so late in the season, than to establish comfortable quarters at Salem. It is stated in the account above quoted, that the journey of the Spragues was made in "the same summer of anno, 1628." This cannot be literally true, for even if they came with Endicott, the summer was over, as we have just seen, before they arrived.

Higginson, who wrote an account of New England † soon after his arrival early in the summer of 1629, alludes to the settlement at Charlestown as if it were just begun. His language is:

"There are in all of us, both old and new planters, about three hundred, whereof two hundred of them are settled at Nehum-kek, now called Salem, and the rest have planted themselves at Masathulets Bay, *beginning to build a town there*, which we do call Cherton or Charles town."

And Danforth's Almanac — which takes precedence in authority of the Charlestown Records, its entries having been made in 1647 — places the foundation of that town in 1629.‡

It has been already stated that Roger Clap, who arrived at Charlestown early in the summer of 1630, saw only one

---

* September 6th, old style, or the 16th, according to our mode of reckoning.

† Printed entire in Young's Chron. of Mass. pp. 242 - 259.

‡ Frothingham's Hist of Charlestown, p. 19.

habitation which he thought fit to call a *house*. This would indicate, at least, that no great progress had been made in the settlement of the place even so late as the period just preceding the arrival of Winthrop.

I am thus led, by a careful collation of all the facts, to adopt the conclusion of Dr. Young, that Ralph Sprague and his brothers, Richard and William, probably took passage in one of the vessels of Higginson's fleet which arrived in the summer of 1629.

J. Page 79.

All the information we have of Edward Sprague, and those of his family who remained in England, is derived from his Will, which was found among the papers of Captain William Sprague, of Leicester, who died in 1832.* It is printed in the second edition of Hosea Sprague's *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham*,† with the inventory of the testator's personal estate, amounting to

---

* Captain William Sprague, of Leicester, was the son of Joseph Sprague, who removed from Malden to Leicester. The name of his grandfather was William, and that of his great-grandfather, Edward. [*Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham.*]

† I am so much indebted to this work that I am sorry to be obliged in candor to say, that — except in those parts of it which are copied from Records or other documents — its statements cannot be implicitly relied on. The author himself left many manuscript erasures and corrections of what he had printed, in a copy of the book which was kindly loaned to me by his kinsman, Leavitt Sprague, Esq., of Hingham, and from which I have transferred the author's emendations into the copy that I possess.

£258 6*s*, and the Register's record of proof; the latter in Latin. The author of the book, just referred to, obtained this old and precious document from Mr. Thomas Edmands, son-in-law of Captain Sprague, above named, and a descendant from Daniel Edmands, who married Mary, the only daughter of Ralph Sprague. The WILL certainly deserves the little additional chance of preservation it may derive from being transcribed into these pages. The following is an exact copy of it as I find it in the work of Hosea Sprague:

"The VIth day of June in the year of our Lord God 1614. In the name of God, Amen. I, Edward Sprague of Upway in the County of Dorset, fuller, being sick and weak of body, but well and perfect in mind, thanks be given unto Almighty God, do ordain and appoint this my last Will and Testament, to be made in manner and form following. That is to say, first of all, I do bequeath my soul unto Almighty God, my savior and redeemer, and my body to be buried within the church yard. As for such temporal goods as God hath blessed me withal, I give and bequeath as hereafter follows: viz., I give unto the parish church of Upway ten shillings. Item — I give unto the poor of the said parish of Upway ten shillings. Item — I give unto Ralph Sprague my eldest son one of the oldest pair of shears in my shop and one lesser pair called the quarrell. Item — I give and bequeath unto my oldest daughter Alice Sprague fifty pounds, to be paid within one year after my decease. Item — I give and bequeath unto Edward Sprague my second son, two pair of shears and twenty pounds to be paid likewise within one year after my decease. Item — I give and bequeath unto Richard Sprague my third son twenty pounds, to be paid when he

shall be one and twenty years of age. Item — I give and bequeath unto Christopher Sprague my fourth son twenty pounds to be paid when he shall be of the age of one and twenty years. Item — I give and bequeath unto William Sprague my youngest son twenty pounds to be paid when he shall be of the age of one and twenty years. All the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable I give and bequeath unto Christian Sprague my wife whom I do make my whole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament, MEMORAND: that if Richard Sprague, Christopher Sprague or William Sprague shall happen to die either of them before they shall be of the age of one and twenty years, that then his legacy to be divided between the other two, or if two of them shall happen to die before they shall be of the age of one and twenty years, that then their legacies to remain to the other then living. *Finally*, I do appoint Henry Samweys and Wilia Bryar overseers of this my Will and Testament, in the presence of those whose names are underwritten — John Bishoppe, — John Taylor, *his mark*. MEMORAND: — that whereas, the living of the aforesaid Edward Sprague doth fall unto his son Ralph Sprague after his decease, the said Ralph Sprague doth upon his father's request promise that his mother Christian Sprague shall quietly enjoy the said living until he shall be one and twenty years of age."

It appears from this Will that Edward Sprague had six children, five sons and one daughter; and that Ralph, the eldest, was under twenty-one years of age on the 6th of June, 1614. The Will was *approved*, according to the accompanying record of the Register, *Edmund Woodhall*, on the 3d Oct. 1614; and hence it is probable that the testator died a short time previous.

K. Page 84.

Of the sons of Ralph Sprague, *John* probably removed to Malden, as I find his name in the Charlestown Records among the signers of a petition from the inhabitants of Malden to the town of Charlestown in 1654. It appears from his brother Richard's will,* that he died before 1703, and that five of his sons were living at that date.

Richard, the second son of Ralph, was a very distinguished and highly esteemed citizen of Charlestown. He was one of the Selectmen of that town fourteen years, the last time in 1700, when he was seventy-five years old; and he was Chairman of that Board four years. He represented the town in the General Court in 1681, and frequently afterwards, and held other offices of civil trust at various times. He was also a military officer, and bore the title of Captain, as his uncle, Richard, had done before him. In this capacity he assisted, with his company, in the revolutionary proceedings which took place in Boston on the 18th of April, 1689, when Sir Edmund Andros and some of his friends were seized and imprisoned. But subsequently, in common with some other influential citizens of Charlestown, he did not approve all the measures of the new Government, and his command was in consequence taken from him; as was also the seat which he then held in the House of Representatives. When, however, the excitement of the period was over, and a new Charter had been obtained from England, Captain Sprague

* Budington's History of the first Church, p. 193.

again held a seat in the General Court, and continued to represent the town until his death.* He died in 1703, at the age of 78.† The church, Harvard College, the free schools and the poor of the town were all indebted to him for liberal benefactions. In his will he bequeathed to the first church a valuable parsonage and lands, besides £100 in money, part of which was to be invested in four silver tankards for sacramental use.‡ To Harvard College he gave £400, and to the free school of Charlestown £50, in money. His house and land adjoining were given first to his sister Mary Edmands — to whom he gave also £500 — and after her death to the poor of the town.§ It does not appear that he was ever married.

Samuel, the third son of Ralph, removed to Malden, where he died before 1703, leaving two sons, John and Samuel,— the latter born in 1666 — and two daughters, Rebecca and Winifred. The former married Ebenezer Austin; and from these ancestors are descended Benjamin

---

* Frothingham's Hist. of Charlestown, pp. 223 - 235.

† From Sewall's Journal it appears that Captain Sprague's funeral, at which the Governor was present, took place Oct. 13, 1703; and that his body was laid in the tomb of Rev. Charles Morton. [Budington, p. 246]

‡ These tankards were sold by the Church June 17, 1800. The following is a part of the inscription engraved on one of them. "This tankard, with three large flagons, were given to the Church in Charlestown by Richard Sprague, Esq.,—a liberal benefactor to the Church and poor of said town, A. D. 1703." [Budington, p. 240.]

§ This house was sold, as appears from the Town Records, to Samuel Henley, May 13, 1732.

Austin of Boston, and Gen. Nathaniel Austin, of Charlestown. Winifred married John Dexter.

The second *Samuel* above named, grandson of Ralph, left three sons, Samuel, John and Richard, and six daughtors. This Richard left two sons, Joseph and Ebenezer, and two daughters, one of whom married Dr. William Stearns of Salem, and was the mother of Joseph E. Sprague, Esq., now Sheriff of Salem. The latter, having always lived with his grandfather Sprague, took his name by act of Legislature in 1800.*

Phineas, the last son of Ralph,† probably removed to Malden, as some of his descendants have lived there for three generations. He had a son, Phineas, who was the grandfather of John Sprague, Esq., now the highly respected Treasurer of Malden.

The only daughter of Ralph, *Mary*, married Daniel Edmands as before stated. She was probably born in 1634, as her baptism is recorded on the "7th month, day 14th"— or September 14th of that year.

---

* Letter of J. E Sprague, Esq , in the "Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham, 2d edition."

† His baptism is thus noted in the Records of the First Church of Charlestown: "Phineas Sprague, the son of Ralph Sprague, and of Jone his wife was baptized, 1637, 5th mo. day 31st." (August 10th, 1637, N. S.)

L. Page 87.

The following is an analysis of *William Sprague's Will*,* which bears date October 19th, 1675: —

He bequeaths to Millesaint Sprague, his wife; —

1. Ten pounds in money, one cow, and one horse.

2. Ten pounds per annum, during her life to be paid to her by his son William, the summering and wintering of one cow and horse, and the use of one half of his dwelling-house, and of one half of the orchard, according to a deed of gift to his son William of his house and several lands and commons.

3. Thirty-five pounds due to him from his son Anthony, to be paid five pounds a year till the whole be paid. But if his wife, Millesaint, should die before the whole is paid, then the balance to be distributed equally amongst six of his children, viz. Anthony, Samuel, William, Perses, (wife of John Doggett) Joanna, (wife of Caleb Church) and Mary, wife of Thomas King.

4. All his household stuff and furniture, linen, woollen and utensils of household during her life, and after her decease, the same to go to six of his children, as above, equally

To his oldest son *Anthony*, he bequeaths; —

1. His share of the cattle, of the household stuff, &c., after his own decease and that of his wife, as provided in other parts of the will.

---

* Printed at length in the "Genealogy of the Sprague in Hingham," pp. 21 – 24.

2 His SWORD,* which was his brother Richard's.

3. One of his biggest pewter platters.

4. Twenty shillings in money.

To his second son *John*, he bequeaths ; —

1. A piece of salt marsh, lying at Lyford's Liking river, in Hingham, containing two acres and a half, given to him by the town.

2. His searge suit of apparel.

These, together with a neck of Upland, called Sprague's Island, which he had before given to John, he judges a sufficient portion for him.

To his third son, *Samuel*, he bequeaths ; —

1. His cloth coat, which was his brother's.

2. One of his biggest *pewter platters.*

To his fifth son *Jonathan* — the fourth also named Jonathan being dead — he bequeaths ; —

1. Sixty acres of land, in the township of Providence, in New England, lately purchased of John Dexter, during his life, and after his decease, to his male heirs, and for want of such heirs to the next heirs of the Spragues descended from him.

2. His best cloth suit of apparel.

To his sixth and youngest son, *William*, he bequeaths ; —

1. One feather bed which he used to lodge upon when he lived with his father.

2. One of his *biggest pewter platters.*

---

* Bela Sprague. Esq., of Hingham, has in his possession three old swords which have come down to him from his ancestors, but of whose precise history nothing is known. It is probable, however, that one of them is the sword referred to in the Will.

3. Two steers, three years old, and the —— and one cow.

The rest of his cattle not before named to be divided equally between the six of his children mentioned under the bequest to his wife, viz; Anthony, Samuel, William, Perses, Joanna and Mary.

(Signed) William Sprague (seal.)

Witnesses { Daniel Cushing, Sen. / Matthew Cushing.

Sworn to before JOHN LEVERETT, Esq. Governor.

M. PAGE 87.

In the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham*, there is an account of the children of William Sprague, and of the descendants of his three sons who remained in Hingham, namely, *Anthony*, *John*, and *William*. But from the last the line is not continued beyond his children; and from John not beyond the second generation, of which only one descendant is given. Through Anthony it is traced to the sixth generation from his father. I have condensed and re-arranged this portion of the work, with the additions and corrections which the author left in manuscript, and with such other additions and corrections, in a few instances, as my researches have enabled me to make.

FIRST GENERATION.

CHILDREN OF WILLIAM.

A. 1. *Anthony*, baptised at Charlestown May 23d, 1636; married in 1664 to Elizabeth Bartlett, daughter of Robert Bartlett of Plymouth. Her mother was a

Warren, grand-daughter of Robert Warren who came over in 1623. Anthony's house was burnt by the Indians in King Philip's war, April 19th, 1676. He died September 3d, 1719, at the age of eighty-four. His will is printed at length in the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham.*

B. 2. *John*, baptised in April, 1638 ; married Elizabeth Holbrook, December 13th, 1666. Removed to Mendon where he died in 1690. His children, mentioned in his will, were John, William, Ebenezer, Elizabeth, Hannah, Millesaint, and Perses. He had two sons by the name of John, and two by the name of William ; the first of each name died in infancy.

3. *Samuel*, baptised May 24th, 1640. Removed to Marshfield prior to 1664, where he became a very prominent and useful citizen. Was Secretary of the Old Colony from 1686 until this Colony was united with that of Massachusetts in 1692. Was great-grandfather of Hon. Seth Sprague of Duxbury. Died in 1610. See a more particular account of him in Note XII.

4. *Elizabeth*, baptised May 2d, 1641.

5. *Perses*, baptised November 12th, 1643; married John Doggett of Rehoboth.

6. *Joanna*, baptised in December, 1644 ; m. Caleb Church December 16th, 1667.

7. *Jonathan*, born about 1646 ; died in infancy.

8. *Jonathan*, born May 28th, 1648. Removed to Rhode Island. Left no posterity.

C. 9. *William*, baptised July 2d, 1550 ; m. Deborah Lane, daughter of Andrew Lane, December 30th,

1674. One of the Selectmen of Hingham in 1690, and again in 1699 and 1703. Removed to Providence in 1713. Was great-grandfather of Capt. Ephraim Sprague of Bridgewater.

10. *Mary*, baptised May 25th, 1652; m. Thomas King of Scituate.
11. *Hannah*, baptised February 26th, 1655; died March 31st, 1658.

SECOND GENERATION.

Children of Anthony. A.

1. *Anthony*, b. Aug. 18th, 1665. Removed to Providence.
2. *Benjamin*, baptised June 10th, 1666; died Sept. 27th, 1690.
3. *John*, b. Sept. 30th, 1667; d. Oct. 8th, 1690.
4. *Elizabeth*, b. Sept 5th, ——; d. Oct. 11th, 1690.

D. 5. *Samuel*, b. March 8th, 1671.

6. *Sarah*, b. May 23d, 1674; m. Caleb Bate.

E. 7. *James*, b. Jan. 23d, 1677; constable in 1720; m. Elizabeth Fearing, daughter of Israel Fearing, in 1702.

F. 8. *Josiah*, b. April 23d, 1680; m. Elizabeth Wilder, May 17th, 1705; d. March 23d, 1760. Lived where Bela Sprague now lives.

G. 9. *Jeremiah*, b. July 24th, 1682; m. Priscilla Knight; d. March 7th, 1759.

10. *Richard*, b. April 10th, 1685. Probably removed to Providence.

H. 11. *Matthew*, b. March 27th, 1688; m. Sarah Fearing, Sept. 13th, 1716; d. June 16th, 1783.

Children of John. B.

1. *John*, b. July 20th, 1669; d. Aug. 11th, same year.
2. *John*, b. Jan. 20th, 1676.
3. *William*, b. June 13th, 1679.
4. *Perses*, b. June 13th, 1681.
5. *Daniel.*
6. *David.*
7. *William.*
8. *Ebenezer*, removed from Hingham.
9. *Elizabeth.*

Children of William. C.

1. *William*, b. Dec. 24th, 1675; m. Silence Tower, April 23d, 1707.
2. *Deborah*, b. May 24th, 1678; m. James Hobart, Dec. 25th, 1750.
3. *Joanna*, b. Feb. 15th, 1680; m. Joseph Barnes, Jan. 23d, 1749.
4. *Jonathan*, b. June 26th, 1686; m. Lydia Leavit, May 23d, 1712. Removed to Bridgewater.
5. *Abiah*, b. Jan. 27th, 1688.
6. *John*, b. Sept. 13th, 1692.
7. *Benjamin*, b. Jan. 3d, 1695.
8. *Silence*, b. Sept. 7th, 1708. [By second wife, widow Silence Tower.]
9. *William*, b. in 1710. Removed to Abington, and is the ancestor of the Sprague of that town.
10. *Jedediah*, b. March 18th, 1713.

THIRD GENERATION.

Children of Samuel. D.

1. *Ruth*, b. April 2d, 1718.
2. *Samuel*, b. Jan. 19th, 1720.

CHILDREN OF JAMES. E.

1. *Elizabeth*, b. Aug. 15th, 1704; m. Bartholomew Doyle, Jan. 1st, 1728.
2. *A Son*, b. Nov. 30th; d. Dec. 23d, 1708.
3. *Jerusha*, b. Dec. 1st, 1712; m. Joshua Tower.

CHILDREN OF JOSIAH. F.

1. *Josiah*, b. July 31st, 1706; d. July 23d, 1778. Kept school at Cohasset in the winter season, and in summer made sleys (weavers' reeds).

I. 2. *Benjamin*, b. Nov. 22d, 1707; m. Deborah Corthell, Dec. 18th, 1735.

J. 3. *Isaac*, b. 1709; m. Leah Stodder, daughter of Simon Stodder, Dec. 15th, 1737; d. Dec. 13th, 1789.

4. *Hannah*, b. Feb. 26th, 1712; d. Oct. 1808.
5. *Ephraim*, b. Oct. 28th, 1714; m. Mary Humphrey, April 21st, 1774.

K. 6. *Daniel*, b. Dec. 21st, 1717; m. Ann Whiton, Nov. 9th, 1758.

7. *Elisha*, b. Aug. 10th, 1721.

CHILDREN OF JEREMIAH. G.

L. 1. *Knight*, b. Oct. 12th, 1711; m. Mary Lewis, May 26th, 1735.

2. *Priscilla*, b. March 22d, 1713; m. Michael Hatch, March 27th, 1733.

M. 3. *Jeremiah*, b. Dec. 18th, 1714; m. Elizabeth Whiton, Dec. 19th, 1739.

4. *Susannah*, b. April 11th, 1716; m. Caleb Marsh, Sept. 17th, 1735.
5. *Mary*, b. Feb. 1718.

N. 6. *John*, b. March 1st, 1720; m. Margaret Webb, May 24th, 1742.
7. *Elizabeth*, b. March 10th, 1724; m. Nathaniel Stodder, Dec. 21st, 1747.
O. 8. *Nehemiah*, lived at Great Plain.
P. 9. *Jacob*, m. Sarah Stodder, Feb. 18th, 1735. Lived at Great Plain.
10. *Deborah*, m. James Hobart.

CHILDREN OF MATTHEW. H.

1. *Sarah*, b. July 16th, 1717; m. Samuel Gilbert, Dec. 25th, 1739.
2. *Margaret*, b. Feb. 22d, 1722; m. Isaiah Hearsy, Dec. 14th, 1743.
3. *Lydia*, b. Oct. 9th, 1723; m. Stephen Stowel, Jan. 1st, 1747.
4. *Israel*, b. 1718; d. 1730.
5. *Noah*, b. Feb. 17th, 1728; m. Ann Hatch, Oct. 9th, 1777.

CHILD OF DAVID.

1. *Sarah*, b. Dec. 14th, 1708.

FOURTH GENERATION.

CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN. I.

Q. 1. *Benjamin*, b. Oct. 10th, 1736; m. —— Stodder.
2. *Elizabeth*, b. March 16th, 1737; d. 1825.
3. *Joseph*, b. Oct. 21st, 1739; d. 1828.
4. *Perses*, b. Aug. 11th, 1741; m. Seth Stodder, March 13th, 1765.
5. *Asher*, b. June 12th, 1743. Went to Scituate.
R. 6. *Jesse*, b. July 28th, 1745; m. Elizabeth Joy, Sept. 7th, 1769; d. March, 1818.
7. *Deborah*, b. June 28th, 1747.

CHILDREN OF ISAAC. J.

1. *Leah*, b. Nov. 14th, 1738; m. Benjamin Jones, Nov. 25th, 1761.
2. *Bethia*, b. March 2d, 1740; m. Benjamin Joy, March 4th, 1762. Was living in Boston in 1828.
3. *Tamar*, b. Dec. 9th, 1741; m. Joshua Lincoln, Dec. 23d, 1763.

S. 4. *Isaac*, b. Oct. 2d, 1743; m. Hannah Jacob; d. March 16th, 1800.

5. *Rebecca*, b. Aug. 18th, 1745; m. Josiah Hersey, 1766. Was living at Passamaquoddy in 1828.

T. 6. *Amos*, b. July 21st, 1747; m. —— Stodder.

U. 7. *Moses*, b. April 30th, 1749; d. Oct. 3d, 1828.

8. *Rachel*, b. Feb. 2d, 1752.
9. *David*, b. May 19th, 1754.

CHILDREN OF DANIEL. K.

V. 1. *David*, b. Jan. 27th, 1760.

W. 2. *Josiah*, b. Nov. 5th, 1761.

CHILDREN OF KNIGHT. L.

1. *Mary*, b. May 27th, 1736; m. John Gross, Aug. 24th, 1755.
2. *Sarah*, b. April 2d, 1738.
3. *Knight*, b. May 25th, 1740; m. Rhoda Marsh, May 13th, 1767; went to Scituate, where he was living in 1828.
4. *Anthony*, b. July 4th, 1742; removed from Hingham.
5. *Olive*, b. July 24th, 1744.
6. *Thomas*, b. Aug 3d, 1746.
7. *Asa*, b. July 24th, 1748.
8. *James*, b. March 4th, 1750.

9. *Thomas*, b. April 26th, 1752.
10. *Caleb*, b. July 2d, 1755.
11. *Lucy*, b. Oct. 4th, 1761.

CHILDREN OF JEREMIAH. M.

1. *Lydia*, b. Jan. 16th, 1741; d. Feb. 24th, 1741.
2. *Lydia*, b. May 7th, 1742.
3. *Susannah*, b. Nov. 11th, 1744; m. James Beal, in 1777.
4. *Jeremiah*, b Oct. 5th, 1746.
5. *Ebed*, b. Jan. 8th, 1749.
6. SAMUEL, b. Dec. 22d, 1753; d. in Boston, June 20th, 1844.*
7. *Joanna.*
8. *Elizabeth.*
9. *Miles*, b. Feb. 14th, 1762; removed from Hingham.

CHILDREN OF JOHN. N.

1. *Lucy*, b. April 17th, 1743; m. Knight Sprague, Feb. 26th, 1761.
2. *Margaret*, b. Dec. 2d, 1744.
3. *Webb*, b. April 10th, 1748.
4. *John*, b. Sept. 9th, 1750.
5. *Joseph*, b. June 30th, 1754; m. Chloe Lane, May 10th, 1779; d. in Boston.
6. *Elijah*, b. Aug. 13th, 1758.
7. *Thomas*, b. June 15th, 1761.
8. *Grace*, b Jan. 8th, 1764; m. —— Souther.

---

* Father of CHARLES SPRAGUE, Esq., to whom I am indebted for the date at which the "good old man" died. See the beautiful poem entitled THE BROTHERS, in the writings of his distinguished son.

CHILD OF NEHEMIAH. O.

1. *Laban*, b. Nov. 18th, 1752.

CHILDREN OF JACOB. P.

1. *Mary*, b. Sept. 1736; m. Lewis ——; removed from Hingham; d. in 1804.
2. *Jacob*, b. June, 1737. In the Revolution went on board a privateer with Capt. Hatch; was taken by the British, carried to Halifax, and put on board their guard-ship, where he died in 1778.
3. *Rachel*, b. July 20th, 1739; d. in 1816.
4. *Priscilla*, b. Aug 20th, 1741; m. Israel Hersey.
5. *Abigail*, b. Aug. 1743; m. —— Bates of Weymouth; d. in Hingham in 1806.
6. *Seth*, b. Oct. 17th, 1745.
7. *Reuben*, b. March 20th, 1749; d. 1822.*

FIFTH GENERATION.

CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN. Q.

X.
1. *Bela.*
2. *Ruth;* m. Thomas Cushing.
3. *Perses;* m. Elisha Burr.
4. *Zenas;* died young.
5. *Laban.*

CHILDREN OF JESSE. R.

Y.
1. *Jesse;* lost at sea.
2. *Elizabeth.*

Z.
3. *Samuel.*
4. *Thankful.*

a.
5. *Elijah.*
6. *Caleb;* d. in 1825
7. *Deborah.*

---

* Grandfather of Jacob Sprague, Esq., of Duxbury.

CHILDREN OF ISAAC. S.

1. *Hannah;* m. Ezekiel Hearsy.
2. *Isaac;* died young.
3. *Leah.*
b. 4. *Peter.*
5. *Joshua.*
6. *Hosea;* author of the *Genealogy of the Sprague in Hingham.*
c. 7. *Isaac;* d. Aug. 26th, 1826, at the age of 44.
d. 8. *Blossom.*

CHILDREN OF AMOS. T.

1. *Desire.*
2. *Amos.*
3. *Lucy.*
4. *Martin.*
5. *Perez.*
6. *Tamar.*
7. *Chloe.*
8. *Jerome;* went to Pennsylvania.

CHILDREN OF MOSES. U.

e. 1. *Moses.*
2. *Levi;* went to Northfield.
3. *Jairus.*
4. *Mary;* m. Joseph Cushing.

CHILDREN OF DAVID. V.

f. 1. *David.*
2. *Matthew.*
3. *Adnah.*
4. *Charles.*

CHILDREN OF JOSIAH. W.

1. *Ann.*
2. *Josiah;* went to Maine.
3. *Elizabeth.*
4. *Edmond.*
5. *Marble;* went to Maine.
6. *Luther.*
7. *Daniel.*
8. *Martin.*
9. *Leonard.*
10. *Henry.*

SIXTH GENERATION.

Children of Bela. X.

1 *Bela.*
2. *Sophronia*, m. ——
Moss of Cohasset.
3. *Name not given.*

Children of Jesse. Y.

1. *Leavitt.*
2. *Mary.*
3. *Nancy.*
4. *Deborah.*

Children of Samuel. Z.

1. *Isaac G.*
2. *Sarah.*
3. *Samuel.*

Children of Caleb. a.

1. *Mehitable.*
2. *Caleb.*
3. *Joseph.*
4. *William.*
5. *Anthony.*
6. *Thomas G.*

Children of Peter. b.

1. *Peter.*
2. *Mary*
3. *Thomas.*

Children of Isaac. c.

1. *Isaac.*
2. *Rachel.*
3. *Lincoln.*
4. *Leah.*

Children of Blossom. d.

1. *Sarah.*
2. *William.*
3. *Hannah.*
4. *Joseph.*
5. *Clarissa.*

Children of Moses. e.

1. *John.*
2. *Ebed.*

Children of David. f.

1. *Jane.* 2. *Sidney.*

Judge Mitchell, in his valuable work, the *History of Bridgewater*, has given a list of some of the descendants of Jonathan Sprague, — grandson of the first Anthony, and son of William (C.) who went to Providence,— with dates of birth and other facts, from which I have prepared the following account.

Children of Jonathan.

[He married Lydia Leavitt of Hingham in 1712, and settled in South Bridgewater.]

1. *Lydia*, b. 1715; m. Solomon Perkins, 1733.
2. *Hannah*, b. 1717; m. Solomon Bates.
3. *Jonathan*, b. 1720; went to Stafford, Connecticut.
4. *Mary*, b. 1722; m. Nathan Edson, 1738.
5. *Sarah*, b. 1725.
6. *John*, b. 1727; m. Susanna Cobb, 1746; had a son, John, 1746, and went to Block Island.
7. *Content*, b. 1729; m. —— Howard, of Dartmouth.
8. *Betty*, b. 1731; m Seth Snow, 1749.

g. 9. *Benjamin*, b. 1736; m. Eunice, daughter of Ephraim Holmes, in 1762; died of small-pox, in 1778. His widow m. Solomon Ames, in 1781; become a widow again, and died in 1833, at the age of 92.

Children of Benjamin. g.

h. 1. *Ephraim*, b. 1763; m. Vina, daughter of Ezra Edson, 1783.

i. 2. *Benjamin*, m. Priscilla Churchill, 1786.

3. *Lydia*, b. 1777; m. Capt. Asa Pratt, 1799.

CHILDREN OF EPHRAIM. h.

j. 1. *Holmes*, b. 1783; m. Betsey, daughter of Daniel Copeland, 1808.
2. *Ephraim*, b. 1787; m. Jane, daughter of Joseph Ames, and went to Bristol, R. I.
3. *Eunice*, b. 1790; m. Calvin Washburn, 1809.
4. *Vina*, b. 1799; d. 1818.
5. *Chloe*, b. 1804.
6. *Mira*, b. 1806; m. John Washburn, and afterwards the HON. JOHN A. SHAW.

CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN. i.

k. 1. *Benjamin*, b. 1790; m. Lucy, daughter of Joseph Ames, 1818.
2. *Friend*, b. 1792.
3. *Lydia*, b. 1749; m. Barna Lernard, Jr 1815.
4. *George*, b. 1801. Went to New York, and thence to Florida.

CHILDREN OF HOLMES. j.

1. *Ephraim Holmes*, b. 1809; m. Lois, daughter of Nathaniel Washburn.
2. *Betsey Copeland*, b. 1812.
3. *Edgar*, b. 1815.
4. *Caleb Cary*, b. 1819.

CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN. k.

1. *Benjamin.*
2. *Fisher Ames.*

NOTE XI. Page 19.

> Go, sit thou by the crystal well, whence he, —
> Our ancestor — last of the honored three —
> On Hingham's Plain, drew forth the frequent draught.

It is pretty well established by tradition, that the dwelling-house of William Sprague was situated on Hingham Plain, near the spot where James S. Lewis, Esq., now resides, a few rods eastward from the corner of Union and Pleasant streets, and opposite to the southern end of Back street. This site is about a mile from the old Meeting-house in the village of Hingham. There is a well of very pure water here, which the same tradition has pointed out as the identical fountain that was first opened and used by William Sprague, and that has continued to furnish its grateful supplies to his descendants and others down to the present time. I visited this interesting locality in August last in company with Solomon Lincoln, Esq., to whose kindness I am greatly indebted for information in regard to the history of the Sprague family. The well has certainly the marks of antiquity upon its walls, which are pressed from their erect position as if by the weight of years.

NOTE XII. Page 19.

Now on yon shores a full-orbed light it yields, —
So fitly titled from their marshy fields.

Reference is made to the town of Marshfield; which was so named, doubtless, from the most characteristic feature of its scenery — the immense extent of its salt marshes, which cover an area of about three thousand acres. *Samuel Sprague* — son of William, and great grandfather of Hon. Seth Sprague — removed to this town from Hingham prior to 1664, under which date I find his name for the first time upon the Marshfield Records, in a list of the inhabitants; though the date of his formal admission, as a townsman, is a year later, May 22d, 1665. At this time he was twenty-five years old, as he was born in 1640; but it is not improbable that he may have gone to Marshfield, before he was of age, to live with his grandfather, Anthony Eames, who is mentioned as a resident there as early as 1652. I am informed by Miss M. A. Thomas — to whose kindness in communicating the results of her extensive antiquarian research I have often to refer — that Samuel Sprague was an occupant of the Chillingworth Estate on South River in 1667.* His

* This estate lay on the north side of South River, and was the identical farm on which Chillingworth Sprague, son of the late Capt. Jonathan Sprague, now resides. At the date referred to, the estate was shared between Justus Eames, Dea. John

wife, Sarah, who survived him, was a daughter of Thomas Chillingworth; * and from the fact stated in the preceding sentence, it would seem that he must have married her early in life, though, according to Judge Mitchell, he had lost a wife previously by the name of Rebecca. †

Samuel Sprague is first mentioned in the Marshfield Records as called to act in an official capacity under date of April 15th, 1667, when he was chosen surveyor of highways. And every year afterwards until his death in 1710 — with the exception of four years — he held some important post in the administration of town affairs. Frequently he was charged with four or five public trusts at the same time. Indeed, during the forty-three years subsequent to 1667, he was sixty-three times elected by his fellow-

---

Foster, and Samuel Sprague. Each of whom married a daughter of Thomas Chillingworth. The name of Eames's wife was *Mehitable*, and that of Foster's, *Mary*. Capt. Jonathan Sprague, above named, was born March 1st, 1744. and died in the spring of 1811, at the age of ninety-seven. His father was James Sprague, son of Nathan, who was a son of Samuel — the subject of our notice. [MS. Letter of Miss Thomas]

* This appears from an old deed dated December 1st, 1690, given by Samuel Sprague, and his wife Sarah, to John Somers, wherein it is stated that the piece of land then deeded to Somers, was a former grant to Thomas Chillingworth, late of Marshfield, deceased ; and that Mrs. Sprague is one of his daughters. This deed is witnessed by Stephen Tilden and *Samuel Sprague, Jr.* [MS. letter of Miss Thomas]

† [Letter of Judge Mitchell in the 2d edition of the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham.*]

townsmen to fill official stations. He was chosen assessor of town and county taxes thirteen times, selectman fifteen times, representative to the General Court ten times, and agent or commissioner on some special service eighteen times. After 1683 he is styled *Sergeant* in the Records; from which it appears that something of military honor was also awarded to him. But it was not only in his own town that he was thus distinguished; he acted a conspicuous part in the affairs of the Colony. In June, 1686, he was chosen "Secretary of the General Court and Recorder of the Court of Assistants,"* and this important office he held — except during the interruption of the Government by Andros† — until the Colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were united in 1692. He died, as already stated, in 1710, at the age of seventy, leaving his wife, Sarah,‡

---

* Old Colony Records. In addition to his other duties, the Secretary of the Colony acted as Register of Deeds, and of Wills. For proofs of the identity of Secretary Sprague and Samuel Sprague of Marshfield, see under N.

† Sir Edmund Andros, appointed by James II., Governor of New England, arrived in Boston, December 20th, 1686. His odious administration lasted from this date until the 18th of April, 1689, when upon a rumor of the flight of James, and of the accession of William and Mary to the throne, (February 16th, 1689,) Andros and some of his friends were seized and imprisoned, to be sent to England for trial.

‡ Widow Sarah Sprague's *will* — in which she bequeaths her wearing apparel to her beloved daughter Mary — is dated May

and eight children — four sons and four daughters.* He had accumulated a large estate in lands, and at his death each of his sons was provided with an ample farm; one of them, James — supposed to have been the youngest — sharing the homestead with his mother. Among the items of his personal property, valued in the aggregate at £185, are enumerated,

Law and military books	. .	£7 10*s.*
Divinity and history "	. .	2 2.
Arms and ammunition	. .	4 5.†

The simple facts of his life, as I have given them in this brief notice, on the authority of ancient records and documents, are proof enough that Samuel Sprague of Marshfield was a man eminent for intellectual ability, sterling integrity, and a most industrious and persevering spirit.

14th, 1725. She therein speaks of herself as very aged, and in daily expectation of her dissolution. [MS. letter of Miss Thomas.]

* See a brief account of Samuel Sprague's children under O.

† MS. memoranda of the late Samuel Davis, for the privilege of consulting which, I must again acknowledge my indebtedness to his brother, Isaac P. Davis, Esq.

N. Page 121.

It is certain that the name of the fourth and last Secretary of the Old Colony — from 1686 to 1692 — was Samuel Sprague; and it has been generally believed that Samuel Sprague of Marshfield was the individual referred to. But I could find no positive authority for this supposed identity in any contemporary document; not even in the Old Colony Records, from which the name of the last Secretary, and the term of his service, are established as above stated. And when, on searching the Marshfield Records, in which the name of Samuel Sprague appears very frequently after 1686, I did not find him once alluded to under the title of Secretary, I was led seriously to doubt the correctness of the common impression that he was the individual who held this office; especially as I remembered the statement of Bradford,* that a son of Francis Sprague, named Samuel, was Secretary of the Colony in 1690.

I have accordingly examined very carefully all the data within my reach bearing upon this point. And although no positive testimony yet appears, I think the following considerations are sufficient to show, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Samuel Sprague of Marshfield was in fact — as commonly supposed — the last Secretary of the Old Colony.

1. The period of time between 1686 and 1692 is pre-

* Notes on Duxbury, Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. x., 2d series.

cisely that during which Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, was least burdened with official services in his own town.

2. He was the only Samuel Sprague in the Colony, who would seem to have been old enough at that date to hold so important a station. He was born in 1640, and was consequently forty-six years of age in 1686. Whereas, of the only two other individuals of that name then living in the Colony, neither could have been much over thirty. One of these was Samuel Sprague, *junior*, son of Samuel, of Marshfield, and the other was a son of John Sprague, of Duxbury, and grandson of Francis; neither of whom took any part in town affairs until after 1699. The elder Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, on the contrary, was distinguished in public life, at least in his own town, long before the date assigned as that when he was appointed Secretary of the Colony.

3. The statement of Bradford is evidently erroneous, as it nowhere appears that Francis Sprague had a son by the name of Samuel.

4. The handwriting of Samuel Sprague, senior, of Marshfield, bears a close resemblance to that of Secretary Sprague.* "No one" — writes Miss Thomas, who has specimens of both — "would hesitate to pronounce them the same."

---

* The handwriting of Secretary Sprague is shown in the similes, figs. No. 1 and No. 2 — which are exact representations of original documents. The first is a copy of a warrant, now in the possession of Isaac P. Davis, Esq., who very kindly loaned it to me; and the second is taken from a manuscript which was presented some time since by Mr. Davis, above-

Co Duxborough School Eight pound
Co Rehoboth School five pound
Co Taunton School three pound
And two pound to m^r Daniel Smith.

Vera copia as Appeares of Record
Test 7th 1697/8 Sam^l Sprague clerk

William Sprague

Mollegaint Sprague her mark M

cisely that during which Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, was least burdened with official services in his own town.

2. He was the only Samuel Sprague in the Colony, who would seem to have been old enough at that date to hold so important a station. He was born in 1640, and was consequently forty-six years of age in 1686. Whereas, of the only two other individuals of that name then living in the Colony, neither could have been much over thirty. One of these was Samuel Sprague, *junior*, son of Samuel, of Marshfield, and the other was a son of John Sprague, of Duxbury, and grandson of Francis; neither of whom took any part in town affairs until after 1699. The elder Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, on the contrary, was distinguished in public life, at least in his own town, long before the date assigned as that when he was appointed Secretary of the Colony.

3. The statement of Bradford is evidently erroneous, as it nowhere appears that Francis Sprague had a son by the name of Samuel.

4. The handwriting of Samuel Sprague, senior, of Marshfield, bears a close resemblance to that of Secretary Sprague.* "No one" — writes Miss Thomas, who has specimens of both — "would hesitate to pronounce them the same."

---

* The handwriting of Secretary Sprague is shown in the similes, figs. No. 1 and No. 2 — which are exact representations of original documents. The first is a copy of a warrant, now in the possession of Isaac P. Davis, Esq., who very kindly loaned it to me; and the second is taken from a manuscript which was presented some time since by Mr. Davis, above-

New plimouth June 5th = 1636

To the Constable of Sandwich Greeting Cos

These are in his Ma:ties name to Require you to warn your millitary Company of your Town & the rest of your Townsmen to meet together on the first Monday in July next at your Pub= =lique meeting house at nine of the Clock in the morn= =ing that all such of your Inhabitants as are lawfully Concerned may make Choyce of Some meet persons in your Town to serve in the office of Leiftenant and Ensigne, in sd Town: That the names of such persons as your Inhabitants shall Legally Choose may be returned to the next court of Assistants for ye Courts approbation according to Law. the persons lately Chosen by your sd Inhabitants Refusing to not accepting of such office. fail not at your pill and make return how you doings be in to sd Court

pr order of Court Saml Sprague Secretary

Pg 2

At a Court of his majesty holden at plimouth ye 6th day of march 168 2/3

This Court have ordered the Capt Monty as followeth viz

To Barnstable School twelve pound
To Duxborough School Eight pound
To Scituate School five pound
To Taunton School three pound
And two pound to Mr Daniel Smith

A true Copie as Appeares of Record
Test 7th 1697/8 Saml Sprague Clerk

Pg 3

William Sprague

Mollegaint Spraguehas marke M

New plimouth June 5th 1686

To the Constable of Sandwich Greeting &c

Theis are in his maj^ties name to require you to
Warn your Military Company of your Town &
the rest of your Townsmen to meet together
on the first Monday in July next at your pub
= lique meeting house at nine of the Clock in the mor
= ning that all such of your Inhabitants as are Lawfu
Concerned may make Choyce of Some meet person
in your Town to serve in the Office of

O. Page 122.

Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, left eight children, four sons and four daughters. I have not been able to ascertain their respective ages, and therefore cannot arrange them by name in the order of their birth. The sons were Samuel, John, Nathan, and James; and the daughters, Sarah, Mary, Joanna, and Hannah.

Samuel, it is presumed, was the oldest son. He removed to Duxbury before the death of his father in 1710; as he was living there on the farm now occupied by his grandson, Hon. Seth Sprague, when that event took place.

John also removed to Duxbury, where he was living on a farm adjoining that of his brother,* above named, at the date of his father's death.

---

named, to Judge Sprague, to whom I am indebted for the use of it. The two are evidently by the same hand. It will be observed that the writer entitles himself *Secretary*, in 1686, and *Clerk*, in 1698, from which it would appear that Secretary Sprague was in some way connected with the Court at Plymouth so late as the year last named.

* These two farms, which Samuel and John inherited from their father, comprised two hundred and thirty acres, and constituted what was called *Sprague's Neck*. This was bounded as follows: — beginning at a point near what is now known as Sprague's wharf, the boundary ran along the shore to Blue Fish river: thence up the river to the neighborhood of John Alden's; thence by land of Jacob Smith to meet a line which ran west-

Nathan probably remained in Marshfield, as many of his descendants are found there. The Christian name of his wife was Margaret. A son of theirs, named James, was the father of the late Capt. Jonathan Sprague, of whom mention has been made in a previous note. Nathan is the ancestor of others of the name in Marshfield; and some of his descendants are also living in Maine.

James, it is probable, was the youngest son, if not the youngest child; as the homestead was left to him and his mother. He married Hannah Black. They had a son James, who married Sarah Jackson, and a daughter Hannah, who married Barnabas Ford. One branch of the Spragues in Marshfield traces its descent from James.

Sarah, the eldest daughter, married Joseph Holmes, of Marshfield. They had a son John, who lived in Plymouth.

Mary married Nathaniel Williamson.

Joanna married John Holmes of Marshfield.

Hannah married John Rogers, junior, of Marshfield, December 11th, 1700.*

---

ward by the sites of the village School-house and the Methodist Church to the house of Daniel Glass. The two farms were divided by the road, now called Harrison Street — that on the south being occupied by Samuel Sprague, and that on the north by his brother John.

* I find the date of this marriage in the Marshfield Records. For my other statements in regard to the children of Samuel Sprague, I have the authority of Judge Mitchell's letter in the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham*, of the MS. memoranda of the late Samuel Davis, already referred to, and of communications from Miss Thomas.

NOTE XIII. Page 19.

Now blends with kindred beams where they are found
In steady radiance on this Pilgrim ground.

It has just been stated that two sons of Samuel Sprague, of Marshfield, *Samuel* and *John*, removed to Duxbury, where they are known to have been living on adjoining farms in 1710, the date of their father's death. I find in the Marshfield Records that John Sprague was constable of that town in 1708; at which date, of course, he must have resided there. On the supposition, therefore, that these brothers removed to Duxbury at the same time, as is most likely, this event must have occurred in 1709, or early in 1710.*

---

* There is evidence in the Duxbury Records that these brothers were inhabitants of that town as early as June 5th, 1710; under which date they are named for the first time in a list of those persons who had a share in "the last division of the Town's commons, upland and meadow." In this list their names are introduced as follows: —

"ye proprietors of ye Farm y^t^ Samuel Sprague Jun^r^ lives on."
"ye proprietor of ye Farm w^e^ John Sprague lives on."

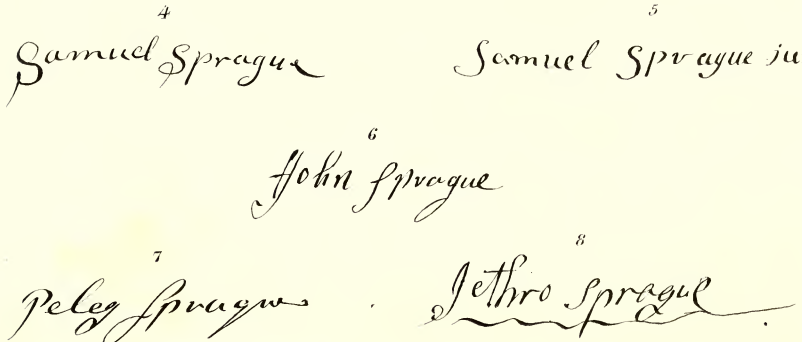
It is plain from the manner in which they are here mentioned, that the brothers did not at this date own the farms on which they resided. It is probable that their father was the *proprietor* alluded to, and that at his death, a short time afterwards, the farms came into their possession, as bequests in his will.

Samuel, grandfather of Hon. Seth Sprague, who was the oldest of the two brothers, and probably the oldest of his father's four sons, is frequently mentioned in the Duxbury Records as Moderator of Town meetings, and grand juryman at the Plymouth Court at sundry times from 1729 to 1742.* He married *Bethia Thomas*,† at what date is not recorded.

* See Note V. — Figure 4 is a fac-simile of Samuel Sprague's signature, as I find it affixed to a deed — dated October 8th, 1761, — by which he conveys his farm to his sons Samuel Jr., and Phineas. From another deed, — dated January 15th, 1740, — by which the former of these sons conveys land to the other, is obtained the autograph, of which figure 5 is a fac-simile. The witnesses to the deed, first referred to, are the brother of Samuel, John Sprague, — whose signature is represented in figure 6, — and his wife Love Sprague. The fac-simile of Peleg Sprague's autograph, as shown in figure 7, is taken from his signature to a deed of land from him to his cousin Phineas, dated March 28th, 1748, — the same from which the signature of one of the witnesses, Jethro Sprague, represented in figure 8, is copied.

† Bethia, wife of Samuel Sprague, Jr., was a daughter of Samuel Thomas, and Mercy Ford. The parents of the latter were Deacon William Ford, and Sarah Dingley, daughter of John Dingley. Samuel Thomas — born in 1655 — was a son of John Thomas and Sarah Pitney, who were married in 1648, the latter being a daughter of James Pitney, who was admitted a freeman at Plymouth in 1643.

Mrs. William Baker, of Marshfield, now over eighty years of age, has a distinct recollection of the wife of Samuel Sprague, Jr., as being, when she knew her, a very old person, very pale, and severely affected with paralysis. Her sister, Sarah Thomas,



Lith. of E.W. Bouve, Boston.

They had four children, PHINEAS, *Samuel*, *Sarah*, and *Bethia*.*

JOHN, brother of Samuel, had five children, three sons and two daughters. The family name of his wife I have not learned; her Christian name was *Love*. The sons were *John*, *Abijah*,† and PELEG; and the daughters, *Joanna* and *Rebecca*.

PELEG, above named, was married to *Mercy Chandler*, as appears from the Records, on the 18th of February, 1746; thus uniting two separate families of the same name, if not of the same lineage. For she was the great grand-daughter of Francis Sprague, her mother *Zeruiah*,‡ being the daughter of *William Sprague*, grandson of Francis.

Peleg Sprague died, probably, about the year 1754, as after this date his name is not found in the Records, wherein previously he is three times mentioned as having been elected to town offices, and

---

married John Holmes, and was nearly one hundred years old when she died.

The great-grandfather of Miss Marcia A. Thomas, to whom I am indebted for the facts just stated, was a brother of Samuel Sprague, Jr.'s wife, above named.

* See under P.

† See under Q.

‡ The birth of Zeruiah Sprague, — December 10th, 1704 — and her marriage with Nathaniel Chandler—March 19th, 1724— have been before mentioned, (Note V.); as also some particulars of her history and character, (Note VII.)

once as having a debt due to him for "keeping" one of the town's poor.* He left two sons, *Nathaniel* and *John*, both of whom removed to Maine.†

Mercy, the widow of *Peleg*, by a second marriage, became the wife of PHINEAS SPRAGUE, cousin of her first husband. The children of this marriage were one son, Seth — now the venerable Patriarch, whom his descendants met to honor on the occasion which has called forth these notices — and two daughters, *Mercy* and *Ruth*. The former married John Chandler, and removed to Maine. Ruth, late in life, married John Burgess, of Plymouth. She died in August, 1845. Her husband and one son, Phineas, survive.

The father of Hon. Seth Sprague, *Phineas*, is first mentioned in the Records as having been chosen constable of Duxbury, March 2d, 1747. And his name appears three times subsequently in the lists of town officers. He was moderator of a town

* See under R.

† I conclude that *John* resided for a time in Weymouth, from the fact that the Duxbury Records, under date of May 9th, 1777, take note of an agreement between Nathaniel Sprague, of Duxbury, *Shipwright*, and John Sprague, of Weymouth, in regard to their respective shares of certain lands in the former town. This Nathaniel left two sons, Peleg and Nathaniel, — neither of whom is living, and several daughters. The birth of Caroline Sprague, "daughter of Nathaniel Sprague, and Hannah, his wife," is registered in the Records under date of February 2d, 1771.

meeting held February 15th, 1747; was elected assessor March 22d, 1762, and surveyor of highways March 14th, 1763. He died in 1775, at the age of sixty-five. For twelve or fourteen years previous to his death, he owned the farm that was his father's, and which has descended to his son; and resided in the house, now standing upon it, which was built by him about the year 1763.*

P. Page 129.

Samuel Sprague, the brother of *Phineas*, and uncle of Hon. Seth Sprague, married Sarah Oldham, July 8th, 1742; and they were the parents of the late *Uriah Sprague* of Duxbury. The latter was born June 11th, 1743, and died February 1st, 1842. In 1796, he married *Lydia Sampson*, daughter of Amos Sampson, and sister of the late Studley Sampson. She was born April 6th, 1747, and died September 1st, 1842.

Their children were; —

1. *Eden*, born April 12th, 1770; married Sarah Hinckley, and is dead. He left no children.

2. *Elethea*, born April 10th, 1772; is still living.

3. *Lydia*, born April 17th, 1776; died October 12th, 1843.

---

* See under S.

4. *Lurana*, born May 18th, 1780; married Weston Freeman, Esq., February 10th, 1802, and is still living.

5. *Joshua*, born March 17th, 1783; died at sea, February 9th, 1807.

6. *Betsey*, born August 28th, 1788; married the late Jacob Smith, May 26th, 1803; died May 11th, 1814.

I am indebted to Samuel Stetson, Esq., of Duxbury — a son-in-law of Jacob Smith, above named — for this account of Uriah Sprague and his family.

Of Mrs. Smith, Mr. Stetson remarks: — "It is said by her connections that Betsey, my wife's mother, was fair, amiable and generous, — a devoted and affectionate wife and mother." And of Lydia he speaks thus: —"Lydia, as you know, possessed a peculiarly happy turn of mind, and devoted herself with untiring energy and fidelity to the comfort and assistance of her aged father, until God in his Providence took her to himself. She had the rare talent of making all with whom she became acquainted her friends; and her hand was always as ready to give as to receive. I have thought that she filled up the sphere in which she was placed as perfectly as often falls to the lot of mortals." I was sufficiently acquainted with the subject of this eulogium to appreciate its entire justness.

Of the sisters of Samuel and Phineas, above named, *Sarah* married Samuel Alden — a descendant of John Alden — February 26th, 1728; and *Bethia* married —— Cushing, and afterwards Jethro Sprague, with whom she removed to Kennebec.

Q. Page 129.

An agreement between *John Sprague* and his brother *Abijah*, in regard to the division of certain lands, is noted upon the Duxbury Records under date of March 8th, 1754. The latter was one of the assessors of town rates or taxes in 1743.

There is a tradition that these brothers kept bachelors' hall, at one time, in the house their father John formerly lived in, which stood on the side of the hill, a little to the northeast of the dwelling now occupied by Samuel Frazer, Esq. It does not appear that either of them ever married.

R. Page 130.

The name of Jane Delanoe, and that of Hannah Wormel occur frequently in the Duxbury records in connection with the names of John, Jethro, Peleg and Phineas Sprague; who, it would seem, had a sort of prescriptive right of boarding at the public charge, or "keeping," as the phrase was, these destitute females; — the only poor of the town, I conclude, at the time they are mentioned.

In one respect, certainly, they were more fortunate than many whom Providence has entrusted to the public charity. Their names, by being entered upon the Records, have been preserved, and in honorable company. But most of those, in our day, who have no home but in an almshouse, find no mention in town records while living, and nothing to signalize even the spot of their burial when dead. It is a sad spectacle, in a church-yard, to see the graves of the poor unmarked by so much as the "frail memorial" of a

head-stone. Can it be that not a single fact or trait in regard to any slumberer beneath those sods deserves to be commemorated? Not long since I counted many such graves in the burial-ground of Duxbury. The sight gave rise to melancholy reflections, which recurred to me forcibly, afterwards, as I was reading the following touching lines of Holmes; the consoling prophecy at the close of which will find an echo in many a heart: —

> "Yet there are graves, whose rudely shapen sod
> Bears the fresh footprints where the sexton trod;
> Graves where the verdure has not dared to shoot,
> Where the chance wild flower has not fixed its root,
> Whose slumbering tenants, dead without a name,
> The eternal record shall at length proclaim
> Pure as the holiest in the long array
> Of hooded, mitred or tiaraed clay!"

But I am happy to mention one honorable exception to the general neglect which has attended the "slumbering tenants" of the poors' corner in the cemetery referred to. The grave of *Sarah McFarland* is distinguished by a plain head-stone of slate, on which is engraved the following inscription: —

IN
MEMORY OF
MISS SARAH McFARLIN,
DIED MAY DAY, 1831.
ÆT. XCII.

This stone is in gratitude erected
By two of her pupils,
*That her goodness respected.**

* The two pupils, who so kindly and delicately manifested their respect for the memory of their teacher, were the late Mrs.

S. Page 131.

The family mansion in Duxbury, of which two correct lithographic views are given in this volume, was built by Phineas Sprague about the year 1763. He had formerly occupied the house in which the late Uriah Sprague resided, and it was in this house that his first and only son

---

Ezra Weston, and her brother, Captain Gershom Bradford, recently deceased.

Sarah McFarland is well remembered by many as an eccentric but worthy individual, who taught school in her younger days, and was especially noted for her powers of extempore utterance in doggerel rhymes. The lines on her grave-stone are evidently written in imitation of the promptings of her own muse. The true spelling of her name is as I have given it, on the authority of her own signature to her will, now before me; for the loan of which I am under a double obligation to Mrs. Sylvanus Smith of Duxbury, its owner, and to Miss A. Brown of the same place, who was kind enough to apply for it in my behalf. This brief but precious document is dated "August 24th, A. D. 1824," and witnessed by the late Major Judah Alden. The testator therein bequeaths most of her property to Mrs. Smith above named.

"Now be it known," she says, "to all my friends and relations, that whereas I am indebted to Mrs. Lucia Smith, the wife of Captain Sylvanus Smith, for making me two new gowns and a petticoat, and many other small garments: To compensate her I do give her a gold ring my deceased father gave me when 14 years old, telling me to be careful of it and wear it in remembrance of him, which I have done and intend to do as long as I do live; but when I shall live no longer, it shall be given to Lucia Smith, and my pewter dishes, too, with every ounce of pewter

Seth was born. At the date of this event, July 4th, 1760, Samuel, the brother of Phineas and father of Uriah, just named, live on the paternal estate in an old house which stood northeastward from the site of the present mansion below where the orchard now is. But in 1761 an ex-

---

that may be found in my house. She shall also have my feather bed and bolsters and pillows even every feather."

This rude *improvisatrice* sometimes committed her verses to writing, and the same kind friend who procured her will for my inspection, has sent to me a few of them in the manuscript of the author. Some of her lines have an amusing Hudibrastic air, though it is not probable that she ever read the immortal poem of Butler. As, for example, the following, "On a mischievous man who sawed in two some of the timbers of a Meeting-house which was to be set too far from his own dwelling:" —

> "I suppose you broke your saw,
> But with it first you broke the law,
> Pray tell me what you did it for."

So, also, the following, "On the First Factory in the Town of Duxbury."

> "Sirs, I like this new way of carding and spinning, —
> It is a brave thing to favor the women,
> It is a thing men ought to do,
> Were it not for the women there would be none of you."

Other lines have an epigrammatic turn; and, if they had been quoted as from certain transcendental poems of recent date, would have passed for genuine specimens. For instance, this couplet, "On the Bolting Mill in Duxbury:" —

> "Solomon was a man of wonderful skill,
> And he built a temple but never a mill."

S. E. View of the Old family mansion.

change of farms and residences was made between the brothers, according to the conditions of which, the sole maintenance of their father, who was then living at a very advanced age, was to devolve upon Phineas. And a year or two after this exchange the latter left the old house above referred to, for the more commodious one which is now standing on the estate as he built it. Few of the humbler class of family dwellings have come down from a preceding generation more precious in their associations than this; though, comparatively, it may not be of great antiquity. It is not quite coeval with the venerable man who now owns it, and who has resided in it ever since it was erected until very recently. But within his lifetime there have been gathered around it more of those recollections which hallow the domestic altar than are usually crowded into the same period. Here he and two sisters passed their earliest years under the dicipline of excellent parents, of whom the father, however, was called away before they had completed the season of youth. Afterwards the mother — endowed with every quality that adorns and endears that blessed name — found here for many years a happy home with her children, and a kind support in her widowhood and old age, at the hands of her only son. In this house, also, were born the fifteen children of that son and his wife, who dwelt here together for more than sixty-four years; and of these children eleven daughters were married under the same roof.

NOTE XIV. Page 19.

> Once more the vision, that we faintly saw
> Approaching slow, and then apace withdraw,
> Re-dawns upon our long awaiting sight,
> In airy vestments clad and heavenly light.

A sketch of Hon. Seth Sprague's mother, slightly touched in some previous lines of the poem, is here resumed. It has been already stated, that her name was Mercy Chandler, and that she was the daughter of Nathaniel Chandler and Zeruiah Sprague — a descendant from Francis Sprague. Her circumstances and discipline in early life have also been before alluded to.*

Her marriage with Peleg Sprague — a descendant from the first William Sprague of Hingham — on the 18th of February, 1746, is the event which I have referred to in the poem as the uniting of "two kindred stocks." It would be exceedingly interesting to follow these stocks — kindred as I have little doubt they were — to their common origin in the mother-country; but, unhappily, "time's effacing fingers" have obliterated all traces of their relation-

---

* See Note VII.

A VIEW OF THE OLD FAMILY MANSION

ship.* One thing, however, is quite certain; that neither of these branches of the family is dishonored by the other.

The subject of this notice was three times married. Her second husband was Phineas Sprague, cousin of Peleg, above named; of which marriage, as before stated,† SETH was the first and only son. Her third husband, to whom she was married late in life, was Ichabod Simmons. And it is by the appellation of "Grandma Simmons" that she is best known to her grandchildren. One of them, Hon. Seth Sprague, Jr., has kindly favored me with the record of his impressions of her person and character, in language so graphic and interesting, that I should do him and my readers injustice not to quote his words at length.

"My grandmother," he says, "lived in my father's family from the time I was a small boy until her death — more than twenty years. She was a little taller than my sister, Mrs. Winsor, not quite so slender, though she was by no means of a muscular frame. She was a well-shaped woman, and I think must have been handsome when young. If regular features, a high forehead, an uncommonly intelligent

---

* Judge Mitchell states that the Coat of Arms for the name of Sprague was granted to one Hugh Sprague in England three centuries ago. [Letter in the *Genealogy of the Spragues in Hingham.*]

† See Note XIII.

expression of countenance, with a dark yellow, withered face, could be called good looking, she was so in her old age. Her expression was very striking. Her eye was black and piercing. You would be led to inquire who she was, at first sight. Ever after I knew her she was a little rounded in the shoulders, and she became more so as her age advanced. Her dress was in the fashion of her youthful days, long, tight-waisted, with prominent hips and well laced stays. She did not at all consult the mutations of fashion, which changed several times while she lived.

"She was a remarkable woman. Though strictly religious, she had little of the superstition of the age in which she lived; putting little faith in dreams, visions, and supernatural appearances, though she did not deny that miraculous agencies were possible, and even probable in certain cases. She was a woman of strong nerves, of great resolution and perseverance. When others faltered, quailed and were terrified, she seemed doubly nerved for action, proceeding always with a coolness that showed her strong mental faculties in full exercise. She never allowed strange or mysterious appearances to pass without a thorough examination. And often have I heard her relate the manner in which she unravelled many things that were thought to be supernatural. With her knitting work in her hands in long winter evenings, while we listened with deep interest, she would tell us stories of her experience, her adven-

tures and escapes, and of Indian wars, and the difficulties of olden times. She was very free and social, talked fluently with a clear, distinct articulation, and her voice was strong and very pleasant.

"Considering the times in which she lived, the sphere in which she moved, and the little attention then paid to female education, I have not known her equal. I do not know a woman in the common walks of life that possesses so much knowledge of the events of the present day, as she did of those of her day. She had no book but her Bible, of the contents of which she had a good knowledge. But her acute, vigorous mind, aided by a memory naturally retentive, was ever learning from observation.

"From her my father's children formed their religious character. Her religion was of the primitive orthodox faith, not however, Calvinistic, and very free from bigotry and superstition. She was perpetually giving us words of caution and direction, thus showing how anxious she was that we should conform to the precepts of the Gospel. She was a woman of piety and devotion, never retiring to her bed until she had visited her closet and offered a prayer to God. Many times, in passing by her window, when the curtain was a little aside, have I seen her at her devotions, which always made a strong impression on my mind.

"She never interfered with the discipline of the family, except when my mother was absent or ill. She was a rigid disciplinarian, kind but firm. Her

look was sufficient — so full was it of expression — to warn us of what we might expect if we disregarded her command. On such occasions her authority was supreme; and we all felt that we were in the hands of one who knew what was right and proper, and would certainly enforce it.

"Her constitution was very strong and vigorous. She was seldom sick. I look upon her as an uncommon woman. Her lot was cast in the humble walks of life. Her husbands were farmers, who obtained their bread by great toil and strict economy. Had she been privileged in her early days to associate with men of learning and refinement, and to move in circles of grace and fashion, none would have excelled her, and few would have been her equals."

I can add but little concerning this excellent woman from other sources. The oldest of her grand-daughters, now living, has assured me that she ever manifested a lively sympathy with all who were in trouble of any kind. When her neighbors were suffering from sickness or affliction, they found her at all times ready and eager to offer aid and consolation. And it is among the brightest of the reminiscences of her grandchildren, that she was always willing to entertain their little griefs and petty vexations, and that she never failed to provide some comfort or alleviation, whatever might be their distress.

The same grand-daughter, referred to above, re-

lates an incident which shows the great respect and even reverence with which 'grandma' was regarded by the younger portion of the family, as well as the calm wisdom of her character. "I remember," she says, "being present during a conversation between some gentlemen at my father's house in relation to an itinerant preacher of the Methodist sect, who had just come among us. The conversation waxed warm, and bitter words of denunciation were uttered against this new disturber of the peace, as he was pronounced to be. Grandma sat by in the corner with her knitting work, and I waited with much anxiety to hear what she would say about the matter, thinking that as soon as she spoke, I should know who was right and who was wrong. Presently her opinion was asked; and she replied by calmly remarking that she thought as did Gamaliel on a similar occasion, when he said; 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.'* From that moment I knew that the preacher had been unjustly condemned. And the rebuke was not lost upon his illiberal defamers, for the conversation soon assumed a milder tone."

---

* Acts v. 38, 39.

NOTE XV. Page 21.

For only they may fitly chant the song,
Who lately lost a mother loved so long.

This mother — so honored and loved in life, and so lamented in death — was the daughter of Abner Sampson* and Deborah Bisbee, both of whom were of Pilgrim descent. She was born October 8th, 1761, and died on the 2d of November, 1844. I shall not presume to speak of her here in any language of my own, when I have before me a tribute as just as it is beautiful, from the pen of her distinguished son, Hon. Peleg Sprague. It appeared as an obituary notice in the "*Old Colony Memorial*," a few days after her death.

"Died, in Duxbury, on the 2d of November, instant, Mrs. Deborah Sprague, wife of the Honorable Seth Sprague, in the eighty-fourth year of her age.

"She had lived with her husband, in the same house, more than sixty-four years, and was the mother of fifteen children, all of whom lived to adult age, and to have families of their own. Her

* See under T.

eleven daughters were all married under the same roof. Ten of her children survive her.* She had one hundred and sixty-two grand and great-grand children, of whom one hundred and thirty-two are now living.

"She and her parents were natives of Duxbury. A descendant of the Pilgrims, she had all their purity without any of their severity. The domestic circle was the sphere of her pleasures and her duties. With these pleasures she was perfectly content, and these duties she performed with cheerful alacrity, untiring assiduity, and eminent success.

"She had been for more than fifty years a member of a Christian Church, and well did she adorn her profession. Hers was the religion of the heart, and there it had wrought its perfect work. Amid all the labors and perplexities of a most numerous household, — with cares for children at home, and anxieties for children abroad, — in weakness and in strength, — in sickness and in health, she was ever the same, calm, benignant, self-controlled, and disinterested, — taking no thought for herself, but anxiously caring for others, and putting forth all her strength for their benefit.

"She bore the ills of life with more than heroic fortitude — with Christian firmness and resignation; and, what is often still more difficult, she bore prosperity without the slightest diminution of mildness, patience, and humility. Never was there perceptible,

* Two have died since the date of this Obituary.

even to her own family, a single emotion of envy, resentment, or any evil passion.

"Sincerity that never changed, truth that knew no veil, and native unaffected delicacy were a part of her being.

"Discreetly frugal and justly generous, she garnered with care the means of liberal and benevolent use. Her charities were in secret. She did nothing for ostentation.

"What others, often in vain, attempt to instil by precept, she effectually taught by example. Hers was not the wisdom of words, the instruction of the lips merely, but the pure and steady light of kindly affections — of a meek and quiet spirit, and of generous self-devotion. Ever assiduously endeavoring to promote the welfare of others, she demanded nothing for herself. Unwilling that any one should be subject to inconvenience for her, she received those attentions and marks of affection which fell far short of her own, — not as her due, — but as acts of unclaimed beneficence.

"She governed by the law of love. Reproof and correction were so tempered and mingled with maternal affection, that her children felt the grief they had given her as the severest penalty of their errors. Ever placid and benignant, no hasty act, no harsh word escaped her. 'Her ways' were 'ways of pleasantness, and all her paths' were 'peace.'

"Her character was emphatically that of goodness. She was a good wife, a good mother, and a good woman.

"She is gone. But the radiance of her mild and quiet virtues still remains upon earth, and will never be wholly extinguished. It shone most directly indeed upon her children, but it will be transferred to future ages, and her descendants to the hundredth generation will have cause to rise up and call her blessed.

"For weeks before her death, she knew that recovery was hopeless, and that her end was fast approaching. Retaining the full possession of her intellect, her resignation was perfect. She was at peace with the world, at peace with herself, and at peace with her God. The fulness of time had come. her work was done. With strong ties of affection upon earth, she was willing to depart. She knew in whom she had trusted. Her faith was certainty. No doubt darkened her mind; not a cloud obscured her vision. The effulgence of Heaven was before her, and she there beheld a crown of glory and rejoicing awaiting her."

T. Page 144.

Abner Sampson, it is probable, was descended from Henry Sampson, who married Ann Plummer, and was among the first settlers of Duxbury. The descendants of this ancestor are very numerous in the Old Colony. But I have been able to trace back the genealogy of Abner Sampson, above-named, only to the commencement of

the last century. In the Duxbury Records I find the following list of the "children of Nathaniel Sampson, and Keturiah, his wife;" —

Noah,	born	Jan.	24th,	1705
Perez,	"	Oct.	21st,	1706
Fear,	"	Nov.	16th,	1708
Robert,	"	April	2d,	1712
Nathaniel,	"	Feb.	22d,	1716
Keturiah,	"	Jan.	14th,	1719
Anna,	"	March	1st,	1723
ABNER,	"	July	3d,	1726

Then follows a list of the "Children of *Abner Sampson* and *Sarah* his wife:" —

Molly,	born	March	22d,	1750
Abner,	"	April	10th,	1752

And next a list of the "Children of *Abner Sampson* and *Deborah* his wife:" —

Sarah,	born	May	13th,	1757
Isaac,	"	March	21st,	1760
DEBORAH,	"	Oct.	8th,	1761
Lucia,	"	Feb.	6th,	1763
Luna,	"	March	29th,	1765
Nathaniel,	"	April	15th,	1767
Aaron,	"	Sept.	20th,	1769
Welthea,	"	April	22d,	1773

It hence appears, that Abner Sampson was twice married, and that his daughter, DEBORAH, who became Mrs. Sprague, was the third child of the second marriage, and one of a family of ten children. Her sister *Welthea*, — the wife of William Freeman, Esq., of Duxbury, — who resembled her in character as well as in features, has but

recently deceased.* *Luna*, who is unmarried, is the only member of this family at present surviving.

NOTE XVI. Page 22.

Amid that radiant throng attendant here,
Encircling hers, six blissful forms are near.

Five of her children had preceded in death the mother, whose virtues have been commemorated in the preceding note, and one had but recently followed her at the time of the family meeting.

Deborah, wife of Ahira Wadsworth,	died	Oct. 28th, 1813
Zeruiah, wife of Perez Thomas,	"	April 2d, 1829
Ruth, widow of George Soule,	"	Mar. 25th, 1836
William,† the second son,	"	Oct. 17th, 1840
Lucy, wife of Rev. Robert Cushman,	"	Nov. 9th, 1811
Judith, wife of Hon Gershom B. Weston,	"	Nov. 25th, 1845

Another daughter, who deeply participated in the enjoyments of the family meeting, has since been summoned, through a lingering sickness,—which she bore with Christian fortitude and resignation,— to join the company of the departed.

Mercy, wife of Charles Soule, died December 17th, 1846.‡

* Mrs. Freeman died April 14th, 1847.

† The wife of William Sprague — Patience Rogers — died November 18th, 1833, at the age of forty-eight.

‡ There have been three other deaths among the kinsmen of the family since the gathering on the 4th of July last. These were of a peculiarly melancholy character, two daughters of Samuel Loring — a son-in-law of Hon. Seth Sprague — and the father himself, having died of malignant fevers in the same house, and within an interval of less than two months.

NOTE XVII. Page 22.

And one just welcome to the admiring train,
Escaped in joy from more than mortal pain.

The death of Mrs. Weston, on the 25th of November, 1845, though to her relatives and friends a sore bereavement, was to herself a merciful release from protracted bodily suffering. The event called forth several obituary notices, of which the following, by an unknown hand, presents a brief, but faithful sketch of the many excellencies which adorned her character.

"The death of this Christian and benevolent lady is deeply mourned by the community in whose midst she lived from her infancy. To all the charitable and praiseworthy efforts of her friends she brought a willing and an able hand. Her death is mourned by many of the aged, and by many of those who, aside from the path of plenty or success, have long been accustomed to take comfort from her charitable visits, and strength from the cheering and timely word of a calm and serene soul. She was a faithful and devoted wife, and a careful and patient mother, and watchful for the happiness and education of a large family. She was of a benevolent and cheerful disposition, and in her benevolence, which was large, unostentatious. She was free from guile, plain-hearted, candid and truth-loving, of a gentle, forgiving and forbearing spirit, considerate of the feelings, and generous towards the wants

and failings of others. She was a firm and discreet friend. Her loveliness and goodness were both great and unpretending. Her well-balanced character, it is to be hoped, did not fail to produce a good effect upon the little community in which she lived, and which now mourns her loss; and upon the hearts of her children, who now sorrow for that greatest bereavement death can make, the loss of a mother. She died at an age and in an hour when her life seemed the most dear and valuable. She was the child of a large and good-exampled family of Pilgrim descent."

Another warm tribute was paid to her memory by her pastor — the Rev. Josiah Moore — in an article published in the *Christian Register* of December 20th, 1845.

"Her illness," he says, "was long and very painful, but she endured it with great equanimity and fortitude; it was rendered all the more trying from the fact having come to her knowledge, that, according to the opinion of the best physicians, she must certainly die before many months should elapse. I have known in my ministerial experience, but few women, called to their last change, under such impressive circumstances. She had every inducement to wish to live. Happy in the love and confidence of her husband, blessed by a numerous family of fond children, nearly all of whom were of an age to appreciate her worth, in the meridian of life, and possessed of the most ample means of doing good, she felt that now the time had come, when

relieved in a measure from those pressing cares, which had confined her much to her own household, she could enlarge the field of her social intercourse, her charities and her usefulness. But, upon the threshold of the practical fulfilment of these hopes and anticipations, she has been called to a mission infinitely higher than that, which she had desired for herself in this world. Truly 'we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth.' 'Man deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.' 'For her to die is gain;' but she has left many to mourn on their own account.

"The occasion of her burial was one of great impressiveness. It was on the afternoon of the day appointed for our last annual thanksgiving, and during the climax of the storm which so fearfully raged upon the sea-board. Although we knew that 'the spirit had returned to God who gave it, leaving the body to be returned to the dust,' alike insensible to storm and calm, yet we could but feel sad, that, under such circumstances, we must bear her from her comfortable and happy home, to the cold and lonely tomb. Yet there was some compensation in reserve for the mourners, for upon the way, the tempest was hushed, as if by a will saying 'Peace, be still;' and, as they turned sadly and despondingly from the grave, the bright bow of promise met their gaze, penciled upon the brow of the impending cloud. It seemed hung out as the spirit's signal, giving assurance that she 'was not there, for she had risen.'

"The death of Mrs. W. has left a vacancy in our little circle which will not soon be filled. She was beloved by all; but especially endeared to the members of her own household. The poor found in her a friend, ever ready, willing and able to relieve their necessities. She was possessed of a thoughtful and discriminating mind, of an amiable and forgiving temper, ever disposed to promote on earth, peace, good-will among men; 'an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.' As a wife, a mother, a friend and neighbor, she was looked up to as a pattern woman among us. Her example was productive of great good while living, and through the remembrance of her virtues, 'though dead she yet speaketh.'

"She was sustained through her long, continued and most distressing disease, by the consciousness that she 'was not alone, for her Father was with her;' by the feeling, too, that as he seems to come nearest in thunder, in earthquake and in tempest, so was he all the nearer to her in the agonizing pains which he saw fit to inflict upon her. If any have had reason to be 'made perfect through suffering,' such, emphatically, was her case. Her faith was a rational, practical, sustaining, consoling faith. She believed in God, in Christ, in immortality. She believed in the social life of the spiritual world; that she should not only meet her departed relatives and friends, but be permitted to watch over and work for those she was to leave behind. It is, in a word, the remembrance of what she was, that makes her loss so impressive among us, but it is in that

remembrance also, that the consolation of the mourner is found."

One of the sons of this excellent lady — John A. Weston — has published, for distribution among her relatives and friends, an affectionate and discriminating memoir of his mother, addressed to his brothers and sisters. In one passage he speaks of her benevolent disposition and her serene temper as follows: —

"The time and care which our departed parent bestowed upon the destitute and needy, gave undoubted evidence of her charity. The hand of friendship and love that she extended to all — both the rich and the poor, the high and the low — and the words of tenderness and sympathy which she ever spake to faint and weary souls, could not be mistaken for the expressions of a momentary impulse, or an excited feeling. They gave confirmation of that deep-seated benevolence in her nature, which always brightened her serene countenance, and added gentleness to her dignified manners. Possessing such a strong desire to do good, and cultivating so amiable a disposition, she preserved the same even temper at all times and in all circumstances. She was never known to speak in the voice of anger, or give any indication that she cherished other feelings than those of friendship for all. This was truly the noblest trait in her character; and one which deserves the admiration and imitation of her posterity through all coming time."

In another passage her piety and her faith in the revelations of the Gospel are thus alluded to: -

"The religious nature which our lamented parent displayed when well, was strongly tested during her sickness. But it wavered not. Like fine gold which fire only purifies and separates from dross, it became cleansed and ennobled by this new trial. The resignation with which she met her illness, and the calm and submissive spirit she exhibited in her agony for months, were the fruits of a holy life, and the rewards of a pious soul. Our parent conversed much on serious subjects, and took great pleasure in hearing others read portions of the Scripture and other good books. She often spoke of God and Jesus Christ, and said she had no fear of dying. When deeply afflicted, she frequently called on her Maker, saying; 'O Lord, thy will be done.' On one occasion when a friend had carried her some food, she said; 'You give me nourishment for the body; but God gives me nourishment for the soul.' A short time before her death, when her mind was slightly delirious, and she was writhing under severe pain, she spoke of a dream, in which she saw Heaven and God and Christ, and millions of happy beings, and said she longed to go there. In her last severe paroxysm of pain near the close of her sickness, she exclaimed, 'My husband and dear children around me, can afford me no relief; but I am not alone, for my *God* is with me.' The character of Jesus she admired and loved, and on the truths which he brought to light she rested her salvation."

The memoir concludes with an appropriate allusion to the peculiar circumstances of her burial.

"The day on which we followed the remains of her who was so beloved and esteemed by us, to their final resting place, will long be remembered by all present on that sad occasion. Every thing appeared to sorrow for our bereavement. The weather itself seemed to grieve and weep. The clouds lowered with a black and threatening aspect; the wind blew violently and howled dreadfully; and the rain poured in torrents. Slowly we moved, in the raging storm, towards the silent and lonely tomb. With doubled sorrow we turned from that barrier of eternity to our gloomy and deserted home. But a change now came over the face of nature. The dark and murky clouds vanished; the rain ceased, and the resplendent bow beautifully arched above the clear blue air in the western horizon, seemed to say to those stricken with sadness; 'T'is past; weep no more; for I am an emblem of that bright and heavenly portal, which has received among the millions of happy souls, that good and faithful one for whose loss you grieve.'"

NOTE XVIII. Page 22.

Thou waitest patient, — O, may they long delay —
Till Angel voices summon thee away.

In the preceding notices I have traced two separate streams of genealogy, until they meet in the venerable man to whom the concluding lines of the poem are addressed. He still lives in the possession of

all his mental powers, and with a vigor of constitution but slightly impaired by the touch of time. It is not fit, nor would it be consonant with his own feelings, that any thing should be written of him here in the language of eulogy; but as my humble work was prompted by an occasion on which he was the principal object of regard, and is addressed especially to his descendants and connections, it would seem to be incomplete without at least a brief narrative of the most important events of his past life.

Seth Sprague, — a descendant in both lines from ancestors of the same family name,— was born in Duxbury on the 4th of July, 1760. The years of his boyhood he spent chiefly in hard work upon his father's farm; with no opportunities of education, except for a short period when he attended the town school then under the charge of the Honorable George Partridge. From him he imbibed not only the elements of learning, but his political principles, taking sides with the Whigs of those days, whose motto was: — "Opposition to tyrants is obedience to God."

The death of his father — Phineas Sprague — when he was fifteen years old, affected him deeply. By this event the whole care of the farm devolved upon him; and although he was of large frame and great strength for one of his age, his physical powers were severely taxed by the labor he was obliged to perform.

He completed his sixteenth year on the memorable day of the Declaration of Independence. A short

time previous he had enlisted for six months as a private soldier in the service of the country. He was one of a company of one hundred men, who were stationed at the Gurnet, where he labored hard with the rest in building a fort. After the expiration of these six months he entered the military service again, but for no specified term, under Captain Sylvanus Drew, who had charge of a number of whale-boats, at Boston, and of a small schooner called the *Lady Washington*, employed as cruisers in the harbor.*

After serving about two months under Captain Drew, Mr. Sprague, in July, 1777, enlisted as a private in the continental service. He was ordered to Springfield to join Captain Bryant's company of artillery, stationed at that place to guard the arsenal and military stores.

At the expiration of his term, he returned home; and in the summer of 1778, engaged in fishing along the shore between Cape Ann and Cape Cod, and sometimes to the eastward of the latter cape. This was at that time a hazardous business; for English

---

* Before Mr. Sprague was attached to this flotilla, the crew of the *Lady Washington* had been engaged in a desperate battle with the enemy. Being chased by an English ship, they took to shoal water out of the reach of her guns; but, as the sea was calm, several boats well manned were despatched from the ship to secure the schooner as a prize. This was found to be no easy task. They were repulsed with the loss of a great part of their men, and the schooner escaped unharmed.

ships and privateers were constantly cruising in that neighborhood.* He pursued it, however, for three summers.

He was married to Deborah Sampson † in March, 1779; being then in his nineteenth year. He looks upon this event as the most fortunate of his life; as having tended more than any other to develope those qualities of character, and to confirm those habits of sobriety and industry, to which, under Providence, he ascribes the prosperity of his career.

He passed the year subsequent to his marriage in severe labor upon his farm. When the war was over, he found occupation again in fishing; and pursued this laborious calling, on the Grand Bank, for about seven summers. All the little means he had acquired by these repeated voyages to the Bank were expended in the purchase from one of his sisters of her portion of the farm inherited from their father.

In the year 1790, having a large and increasing family to provide for, and perceiving that the income from his farm, however industriously tilled, would be hardly sufficient to keep him from poverty, he resolved, as a probable means of advancing his fortune, to engage in trade. With no previous knowledge of matters appertaining to bargain and sale,

---

* One fishing vessel owned in Duxbury, and commanded by Capt. Lewis Drew, was taken at this period and carried to New York. Her men were put on board the old Jersey, prison-ship, in which horrible quarters they all died except one.

† See under T.

without money, and without influential friends, how was he to take the first step in this change of employment?

On the strength of his reputation for industry and integrity, and on pledge of his real estate, he succeeded in hiring a small sum of money; which he invested, at Boston, in West India goods, crockery, and an assortment of small articles. He had relied on the assistance of his wife in retailing his stock at home; but soon after his return, she was taken sick and remained an invalid for two years.

The profits of his new business exceeded his expectations. It was not long before he was able to buy goods on credit, in Boston, as extensively as he wished. At the hazard of incurring the ill-will of two or three of his fellow-townsmen, who had enjoyed a quite lucrative monopoly in supplying the fishermen of the place with stores, he determined to enter into competition with them.

His early success in trade enabled him to purchase a small fishing schooner, which by the profits of her voyages more than paid for herself in four years; and at the expiration of this period he sold her at a large advance on the first cost. This operation encouraged him to extend his interest in navigation; and afterwards he was in the habit of building two or three vessels every year and selling them, as soon as he had opportunity, at a considerable profit.

His prosperity in this line, however, was chequered by reverses. The navigating interest in those days was exposed to great hazards. The rates of

insurance were so high, and policies so difficult to be had at any premium, that many merchants conducted their voyages at their own risk. Three of Mr. Sprague's vessels were wrecked at sea; two without any insurance, and the other only half insured. The wreck of another occasioned the loss of her entire cargo of dried fish belonging to him; and a similar disaster happened to a valuable cargo of corn which he shipped to a port in Spain.

Mr. Sprague had been actively employed in trade and navigation for nearly thirty years, when a remarkable change came over his feelings and tastes. Although in perfect health both of body and mind, and in the possession of what was comparatively only a moderate competence, he had no desire for further gains. This occurred about twenty-five years ago, when he sold his vessels and goods to two of his sons, and withdrew from business. Since that time he has devoted himself anew, on his farm in Duxbury, to the quiet and more grateful pursuits of husbandry.

Thus far I have spoken only of his private life; but during the period to which I have referred, he was frequently called to the public service. His name has been more or less connected with public affairs in his native town and in the State, ever since 1788. He was forty years a Justice of the peace and of the quorum, and a member of the Massachusetts Legislature twenty-seven years; sometimes in the House and sometimes in the Senate. He has been several times chosen one of the Counsellors to the

Governor of the Commonwealth, but always declined that honor. In the year 1813 he was appointed by the President of the United States principal assessor for the thirteenth District of Massachusetts — a trust which imposed upon him an arduous service, as he was obliged to make a valuation of estates throughout the County of Plymouth, and apportion the taxes thereon for three successive years, correcting the valuation each year. He has also been twice honored by being chosen a member of the electoral college, which determines the choice of President and Vice-President of the United States.

But I should omit much that would be interesting to his descendants, if I did not allude more particularly to some of the incidents of his public life, as well as to his connection with the great moral and religious movements of the times.

When Mr. Sprague first entered upon public duties, he was the youngest man in his native town that took an active part in its concerns, as he is now the oldest citizen of the place who attends the town-meetings. The earliest occasion on which his agency in the affairs of the town began to be eminently conspicuous, occurred in the year 1798, when he took an especial interest in the measure of opening what is now the main thoroughfare of the place — the road which runs near the shore of the Bay from Powder Point to the house of the late Captain Daniel Hall. Indeed he and three other influential citizens*

* Ezra Weston, Joshua Winsor, and Samuel Delano.

of the town may be said to have been the sole projectors of this road; for they were at first almost its only advocates. They employed a lawyer at their own expense to plead for it before the Court of Sessions; from which tribunal authority to lay out roads in the several towns of the county was then derived. The town, in its public capacity, appeared, by attorney, in opposition to the measure. Nevertheless it was finally sanctioned by the Court, and the road was laid out, and completed in the course of two years, according to the wishes of its friends. But in order fully to carry out their design, it was necessary to construct a bridge over Blue-fish River; and those who had opposed the opening of the road, took the ground that as the river was navigable water, the Court of Sessions had no power to order the erection of a bridge over it. Several town-meetings were held, between the years 1800 and 1803,* and much animated discussion ensued in relation to

* Town Records. The year 1801, especially, seems to have been a season of great excitement in Duxbury. In the midst of the warm discussions about the new road and bridge, another topic of a still more inflammatory nature came up. The report is still current that the dwelling-house of the Rev. Dr. Allyn was subjected at that time to a series of outrages so mysterious in their circumstances, that even the agency of witchcraft was seriously suspected by some. Stones were heard, night after night, to rattle down the roof, and sometimes to strike against the windows and sides of the building, and on looking without for the cause, nothing appeared, though the whole neighborhood had turned out to watch. At other times, the house was broken open

this subject. It was contended, furthermore, on the part of the opposition, that the cost of the bridge would be very great — three thousand dollars at least. To meet this objection, Mr. Sprague, and his friends above referred to, after privately agreeing to be joint undertakers to build a bridge and dam, according to a model which they had prepared, petitioned the selectmen to call another town-meeting. A meeting was accordingly soon after convened; and when the arguments of the opposition began to turn, as before, upon the enormous expense of the

---

and several utensils stolen therefrom, and finally, on a Sunday, when most of the family were absent at church, it was discovered to be on fire. At length a servant-girl in the employment of Dr. Allyn was suspected and brought before a court of inquiry, but nothing was elicited to warrant her punishment, and the matter was finally dropped.

I find the following entry in the Town Records in relation to this subject; — "July 27th, 1801. Voted, that Major Judah Alden receive communications respecting the villany committed against the Rev. Mr. Allyn, and that he prosecute the same; this Town having been informed that the Dwelling-house of the Rev. Mr. Allyn has been repeatedly broken open and sundries stolen and carried away, and other outrages committed in said house: which conduct is received by the town derogatory to their reputation and honor, and dangerous to the peace and order of society; especially as it has been committed on the dwelling of their minister. Therefore Voted, that whoever will detect and bring to legal conviction and punishment the person or persons concerned in the above audacious villany shall receive the sincere thanks of the town and a Reward of five hundred Dollars in money."

proposed structure, Mr. Sprague took the opportunity to move that the town agree to build the bridge, after the model there exhibited, provided any responsible man would undertake the work for the sum of fifteen hundred dollars. The motion was put to vote without debate and carried. Thereupon one of the four,* who had made the agreement alluded to, immediately rose and accepted, in his own name, the offer of the town, as expressed by the vote just passed. This occurred on the second Monday of February, 1803.† The very next day preparations for building the bridge were commenced in good earnest by the contractor and his associates. Some of the most persevering in the ranks of the opposition threatened to call still another meeting, with a view to have the recent vote reconsidered. But the undertaking proceeded so rapidly, that before this threat could be executed, it was quite too late to think of retracting. In the course of a few months the bridge was completed to the satisfaction of a Committee of the Town,‡ who had been chosen to oversee and inspect the work of its construction.§

In March of the last named year, 1803, Mr. Sprague was chosen Treasurer of the town; and

---

* Joshua Winsor.

† Town Records.

‡ This Committee consisted of the following persons: Samuel A. Frazar, Ezra Weston, and Isaiah Alden.

§ See under U.

thereafter he was annually re-elected to this office until 1809. He was in the mean time successively a Representative and Senator in the Legislature of the State, and subsequently he occupied a seat in one or the other branch of that body for many years. His influence here was most conspicuous while he was a member of the Senate between the years 1810 and 1813. At this time he was one of the leaders in the project of establishing a State Bank with a capital of three millions of dollars, subject to a tax of one per cent. annually, to be paid into the State Treasury, — the same tax to be imposed on all the banks of the Commonwealth. This measure was devised and finally carried into effect, through the influence of a few members of the then Republican party, only two of whom are now living.*

In 1813 Mr. Sprague brought forward a motion in the Senate, by which a committee was raised to consider the expediency of building a ship of war by the State, to be sold, when finished, to the United States, and used in the prosecution of hostilities with England. He, as chairman of that committee, would have reported, of course, in favor of the proposal; urging, as it appears, the argument, that the construction of such a ship in the manner suggested, would give employment to the mechanics of the State, and thus be a public benefit. To meet the necessary expenditures, he alleged that money

---

* Hon. William King and Hon. Seth Sprague.

might be borrowed of the banks at five per cent. per annum, and that repayment might be made out of the income from the tax recently imposed upon the banking capital of the State. In this way, — it was argued by the friends of the project, — the people, having never received the benefit of the new tax, would not feel, in the least, the burden of the debt. It was likewise a part of the proposal that the construction of the ship should not be commenced until the Government of the United States had agreed to take her, when finished, at cost. But the reasoning of Mr. Sprague, and others of his party, was overruled by a majority of the Committee, who made a detailed report in opposition to the measure.

When this report was taken up in the Senate, it gave rise to a long and animated discussion, not only of the question in hand, but of the whole subject of the existing war with England. Mr. Sprague, at the opening of this debate, delivered a very able speech in defence of his proposition; and subsequently, in reply to the remarks of his opponents, he advocated, in a forcible and eloquent manner, the measures of the Administration. His speeches, on this occasion, were of greater length than ever marked any other effort of his before the Legislature.

A year later, an incident occurred in Duxbury, to which, in the order of time, and from its relation to the war just spoken of, as well as to Mr. Sprague's agency in the affairs of his own town, I must now advert.

The inhabitants of Duxbury had become much alarmed in anticipation that the enemy would come into their harbor, and burn their shipping, as they had done at Wareham and Scituate. A committee of safety was chosen to devise ways and means of defence. Mr. Sprague, as a member of this Committee, was delegated to make application to the Board of War, then sitting at Boston, for cannon and ammunition. With some difficulty,* he procured the grant of a quantity of powder and balls, and two field-pieces. These with three or four other pieces, the expense of which was defrayed by a subscription on the part of the citizens, were placed at different points of the town where it was supposed the enemy might land.

But notwithstanding these vigorous preparations for resistance in case of an attack, it was proposed by some members of the committee of safety, while the subject of making an official report of their doings to the town was under consideration, that the committee should recommend that a messenger be sent to the commander of the English ship of war, then cruising between the Capes, with the assurance

---

* This Board of War was appointed by the State Government. In reply to Mr. Sprague's application, General Cobb, who was a member of the Board, remarked that it would be idle to listen to it; for, he alleged, the inhabitants of Duxbury would not know how to use cannon and ammunition if they had them. Governor Brooks, however, thought differently, and influenced the Board to comply with the request.

that the inhabitants of Duxbury were inclined to neutrality. Mr. Sprague protested at once, and with great earnestness, against the proposal as cowardly and treasonable, as well as inconsistent with the measures already taken for defence, and intimated his purpose to withdraw from the committee if such a recommendation should be offered. A majority of the members, however, persisted, and made their report accordingly to the citizens legally convened in town-meeting. Mr. Sprague, at this stage of the proceeding, again interposed a strenuous opposition; and when, finally, the motion to adopt the suggestion of the committee was carried in the affirmative, he declined to serve any longer as a member of it. He was not, however, entirely alone in the view he had taken of this matter. Before the meeting closed, Captain John Alden * took occasion to express his convictions of the impropriety of the vote just passed, and moved a reconsideration. His remarks so far influenced the assembly that the motion prevailed by a small majority.

However, notwithstanding this final rejection of the committee's proposal, it appears that a message of the kind suggested was in some way conveyed to the commander of the English ship; as a letter of

---

* Son of Col. Ichabod Alden. He is still living in Duxbury, and remembers distinctly the incident alluded to; as he himself assured me only a few weeks since.

his in reply to it is still extant.* And Mr. Sprague, having accidentally been made aware of this fact, at the time, by an inspection of the letter, and having learned, besides, that the commander proposed to send a boat into the harbor, in a few days, on a friendly visit, repaired forthwith to Boston and informed General Dearborn of what had taken place. The latter immediately sent an order to the captain of the fort at the Gurnet to let no boat of the enemy's pass that point if it was in his power to prevent it. †

In 1820 Mr. Sprague was seized with a severe fever, from the effects of which he did not fully recover for several years. While in this enfeebled condition he was chosen to represent Duxbury in the General Court under somewhat peculiar circumstan-

---

* I first received information of the existence of this letter from Captain Martin Waterman, of Duxbury, who stated that it was then in the possession of his brother, Thomas W. Herrick, Esq., of Brighton, and was found among the papers of their late father. I subsequently visited Mr. Herrick, and was kindly permitted by him to take a copy of the letter for publication in this volume. It will be found under V.

† A few days after this order was despatched, the enemy's boat appeared off the Gurnet with a white flag. The officer on board of her was informed by a messenger that if he had any communication to make, it must be made to the captain of the fort. He replied that he wished to visit Duxbury. To this the messenger rejoined, that if the boat proceeded any further, she would be fired upon. The hint was taken, and the boat returned to the ship. Previously to this occurrence, one of the enemy's barges coming within gun-shot of the fort had been fired upon and sunk.

ces. The inhabitants of the northwestern portion of the town had petitioned the Legislature to be set off to Marshfield. But a decided majority of the citizens of Duxbury were opposed to the petition; and the matter was deemed of so much moment, that all party distinctions were for the time forgotten in the selection of a representative who should be sent to the Legislature with special reference to this question. The choice of the people fell unanimously upon Mr. Sprague, and he accepted the trust.

But when the subject of dividing the town came before a Committee of the two Houses, his health was so feeble that he was quite unable to do justice to his cause in opposition to the arguments of the two advocates who appeared for the petitioners. The committee, in consequence, reported unanimously in their favor, and the report was accepted by the Senate. Flushed with his apparent triumph, one of the advocates alluded to took occasion, though in a playful mood, to utter some expressions of taunt towards the representative from Duxbury. The latter warned his antagonist not to claim the victory prematurely. Several days afterwards, when the question of concurring with the Senate came before the House, Mr. Sprague, whose health had greatly improved, was able to speak upon the subject to some purpose. His remarks, in fact, had so much weight, that the House refused to concur with the other branch in accepting the report of the committee; and it was finally determined that the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petition.

Mr. Sprague again occupied a seat in the Senate of Massachusetts in 1823. And it was on his motion, in the session of this year, that that body voted to erase from the Journal the somewhat noted resolution, — passed by their predecessors, several years previous, in relation to the last war with England, — to the effect that the war was begun and continued, on the part of the United States, without due provocation, and that it was unbecoming a moral and religious people to rejoice at victories obtained in such a cause.

It should be stated here, lest the part which Mr. Sprague took in relation to the war with England should be misinterpreted, as indicating the opinions he at present entertains, that since his retirement from public life, his views on the subject of war have undergone a material change. He is now fully persuaded that an appeal to arms for the settlement of national controversies is unjustifiable and sinful, as being contrary to the teachings of Christ. For the last twenty years he has given an earnest support to those principles and measures which tend to ensure the establishment and the reign of peace on the earth.

During the same period he has devoted himself with much zeal to other moral and social reforms. He was an early laborer in the cause of temperance. He presided at the first temperance meeting ever held in the County of Plymouth, and at the first meeting of the kind ever held in Duxbury. He embraced the cause when the popular feeling was

against it, — at a time when grave deacons and even clergymen were reluctant to abandon the use of intoxicating drinks. It is with no ordinary satisfaction, therefore, that he witnesses the change which has taken place in the sentiments of the community on this subject.

With the views of the Abolitionists of the Northern States he has felt, from the first, a very strong sympathy, and has always manifested a lively interest in their proceedings. He has taken a leading part in several of their associations; having been President of the Plymouth County and of the Duxbury Societies, and Vice-President and Manager respectively of the Massachusetts and American Anti-slavery Societies. He continues to be a zealous advocate of their principles, to note their doings and to attend their principal meetings.

At the age of thirty Mr. Sprague made a public profession of religion by uniting himself with the Unitarian Church in Duxbury, then under the pastoral charge of the late Rev. Dr. John Allyn; and he continued to worship with that society many years. Circumstances, however, at length occurred, which induced him to dissolve this connection; and when, about twenty-five years since, the Methodists began to have preaching in the town, he attended their meetings and soon embraced their principles; though, at first, in common with many others, he had looked upon them with some measure of distrust. To him they were indebted for their first house of worship; and when this proved too small

to accommodate their increasing numbers, he assisted them in providing a larger and better house by a gift of land on which to erect it, and by a liberal contribution towards the expense of the structure. Here he had the satisfaction of being for twenty years a constant attendant at religious services, with a large congregation of worshippers, who looked up to him as their benefactor, and spoke of him under the endearing title of 'father.'

Five years ago, however, being convinced that the Methodist Church in its Episcopal organization was arbitrary and anti-republican in its spirit, and that it was furthermore exerting its vast influence in favor of Southern slavery, he deemed it his duty to withdraw altogether from its government. And being joined in this step by many other members of the Episcopal society of Duxbury, the secession led to the organization of an independent church, and the erection of another house for its accommodation.

But his own motives for seceding will be more fully explained by the following letter, which he addressed

"To the Minister and Members of the
Methodist Episcopal Church in Duxbury.

"Beloved Brethren,—After much deliberation and prayer, I now feel it to be my duty to ask a dismission from the Methodist Episcopal Church. I had entertained hopes that the society in this place would have thrown off Episcopal government, and become an independent Church, acknowledging no head but

Christ. In that I am disappointed, and I now feel it to be my duty to ask a dismission from all connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. In doing this, it is but reasonable that I should explain my motives both for joining the church and for leaving it. Permit me, then, to say, that the principal reason for my joining the Methodist Episcopal Church was; that I thought — and do now so think — that the doctrine taught by John Wesley and his followers was the true doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. I also thought that the Methodist societies were Anti-slavery and Temperance societies. I had read some of the writings of John Wesley, and particularly noticed his denunciation of slavery. He called it the worst of villanies. I had read the 'Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church,' but I confess that I had not read it with that attention which I ought to have bestowed upon it. I have since, however, read it with more attention, and am now convinced that it is anti-republican and extremely arbitrary, and such as no Christian ought to submit to. At the time when I joined this Church — about twenty years since — the Bishops and General Conference had in no instance, to my knowledge, used their influence for the continuance of slavery, or any other sin in or out of the church. But they were then trying to spread Scripture holiness through the land. By degrees the sin of slavery crept into the church; and when an attempt was made by a few of its members to expel that enormous sin, all the official influence of the Church was arrayed against them;

and for eight years last past it has been persecuting Abolitionists and trying to defend slavery. The Annual Conference in the slaveholding States has passed resolutions declaring that slavery, as it existed in the United States, was not a moral evil. I consider the Methodist Episcopal Church as one great prop in support of slavery; and that, so long as I remain a member of that Church, I am virtually giving my influence in support of slavery. I am sensible that my influence in society is very small; but small as it is, it ought to be exerted in favor of humanity. I am aware that I have but a short time to live; but if I have only one day of life remaining, I wish, on that day, to be found in the way of my duty.

"I have not made up my mind hastily on this important subject. I know that I shall soon exchange worlds, and I expect to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to be judged for the deeds done in the body. If I do not here, whilst in the body, bear testimony against all sin, I shall be condemned by my Judge; but if I am faithful to avoid sin myself, and bear testimony against it in others, I expect to hear that blessed sentence, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, enter the kingdom prepared for you.' Be assured that my prayer is, and ever shall be, that the blessing of God may at all times attend you, and I ask your prayers for me that God would, of his infinite mercy, expel all error from my head and wickedness from my heart; and that you and I may be so unspeakably happy as to meet in Heaven, and join the Church triumphant in glory,

where we shall be for ever perfect in judgment and holy in disposition."

A large majority of the society were disposed to adopt the views expressed in this letter; but a few adhered to the Episcopal system, and were not willing to relinquish the right, which they legally had to retain the meeting-house for their own use.* At this juncture, finding it impossible to make any arrangement to which this minority would accede, Mr. Sprague, to avoid all contention, determined to provide another house, at his own expense, for the accommodation of those who coincided with him in his preference of an independent church. In the mean time, the seceders had formed a separate organization under the title of the "Wesleyan Church," and while the new structure was in progress, they held their meetings in one of the public school-houses.

The two societies now worship in different temples; but their separation does not seem to have permanently disturbed the friendly relations which formerly subsisted between their respective members. And they all entertain, as before, the highest respect for the venerable subject of this notice, as their friend, benefactor, and Christian brother.†

---

* When the vote was taken upon the question, whether the society would adopt an independent organization, only four members voted in the negative.

† The following Resolution expresses the feelings entertained towards him by those members of the original society who did

Full of years and of honors he enjoys, indeed, the regard of all who know him. His declining days, thus far, have been as happy as his youth and manhood were prosperous. His past life, in many respects, has been singularly blessed. From the age of nineteen, and for more than sixty-four years, he had the happiness to live in the society of a wife who was in every sense a help-mate — a prudent guardian of his household, a wise counsellor, a kind and faithful friend. And her loss, a few years since, though grievous, has been mercifully compensated to him by the sweet savor of her memory, and the sure conviction of her blissful existence in a better world. Of the fifteen children,* who were vouchsafed of Heaven as the crown of their wedded life, not one died in infancy, all passed honorably through the temptations of youth, all were happily married, and eight now survive. Of four sons, three are

---

not agree with him in his views of the Episcopal form of Church government:—

"At a meeting of the official members of the M. E. Church in Duxbury, held on the 3d of October, 1842, it was unanimously *Resolved*, that the judicious advice, the accommodating spirit, and the Christian deportment of our father in the gospel, Seth Sprague, senior, during his connection with this Board, have been such as to secure to him our profoundest respect and warmest affection; and the resignation of his station among us is received with deep regret.

"Signed by preacher in charge, Wm. T. Harlow,
and Secretary of meeting, Wm. Bradford."

* See under W.

living, each of whom has been honored with high station, and one now graces a lofty position under the Government of the United States. Such a husband and such a father must needs have many sources of comfort in the evening of life. Happy, indeed, must he be, if, as in the case of our Patriarch, the gratitude, prompted by the enjoyment of such favors, is mingled with a faith, clear as vision, in an immortal life, and the reunion of friends beyond the grave.

U. Page 165.

The work of constructing the bridge over Blue-fish River, in Duxbury, was begun in April, 1803, and finished on the 3d of July following. On the afternoon of that day, Mr. Sprague, accompanied by his wife, had the satisfaction to be the first to cross the bridge in a carriage. Over its centre a temporary arch had been raised, on which a spread eagle of wood was fixed, with the following motto attached, — taken from Jefferson's inaugural address: — "Peace, Friendship, and Commerce with all Nations; entangling Alliances with none."

The next day, being the fourth of July, the citizens of Duxbury celebrated the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. On which occasion two military companies, under the command of Captains Dingley and Alden,* escorted a large party of ladies and gentlemen to the bridge, on each side of which the soldiers formed a col-

* John Alden, son of Col. Ichabod Alden, before mentioned.

umn while the procession passed between. After proceeding a short distance, the order of march was reversed, and the party repaired to the hill, on the south of the river; where a bountiful entertainment had been provided, chiefly by those who had favored the project of erecting the bridge. Mr. Sprague presided at the table. The day was pleasant; and never, perhaps, have the citizens of Duxbury met together with so much hilarity and good feeling as distinguished this occasion. Notwithstanding the project had been so bitterly opposed, almost all seemed pleased when it was finally accomplished. The contractors were losers, to some small extent, by their undertaking; but the ultimate cost of the work to the town was only four hundred dollars, the mill privilege, created by the dam, having been disposed of for eleven hundred.

There is extant in manuscript an amusing account of some of the incidents connected with the erection of this bridge, written soon after their occurrence, and generally ascribed to Dr. Rufus Hathaway.* It is excellent in its way, and certainly worthy of a more durable form in print. And as there is little danger that the personal allusions in it will offend any one at this late day, — if, indeed, they could ever have had such an effect, — I am glad of an opportunity to give it an equal chance of perpetuity with the other contents of this volume; especially as it may serve to confirm, in part, my own statements. I shall leave, however, the explanation of its personal and local references to the same commentator that has hitherto elucidated

* The authorship of the account alluded to has also been attributed to the late Major Judah Alden.

the document; namely, the tradition of the elders. I will premise, further, that I have omitted one short paragraph, which seems to mar the unity of the subject by irrelevant matters; and have, moreover, taken the liberty to divide the text into verses, with numerals prefixed; — a proceeding for which those familiar with the history of the original Scriptures will acknowledge that I have good authority.

"1. And it came to pass in the days of Cæsar, the King, that he commanded his servant Joshua, saying, get thee up a journey into the land of the Hanoverites, to Benjamin, the Scribe.

"2. And say unto him, I, Cæsar, the King, have sent forth my decree, and commanded that the people in the land of Sodom shall no longer be separated from the Westonites, the Drewites, and the Cushmanites, that dwell on the north side of the great river Blue-fish.

"3. And also command Benjamin, the Scribe, that he forthwith make out a petition and convey it to the Judges and Magistrates of our land, commanding them that they straightway direct the Sodomites, the Westonites, and all the other Ites, within our borders, to build a bridge over the great River Blue-fish.

"4. So the Judges and Magistrates, fearing Cæsar, the King, and Joshua, his servant, commanded that the bridge be built according to Cæsar's decree.

"5. But it came to pass that there arose up certain of the tribes of Judah and Levi and of Samuel, and of the Chandlerites, and others most learned in the law, and showed unto the Judges and Magistrates that Cæsar, the King, had done wickedly, in commanding what was un-

lawful to be done, and so by the voice of the multitude the decree was set aside.

"6. And it came to pass that Cæsar and the Sodomites wrought up the minds of the people, and cast such delusions before their eyes that they had fear before Cæsar, the King, and at length resolved to build the bridge, and connect Cæsar's dominions to the land of Sodom.

"7. And now behold Cæsar, the King, has erected an arch fifty cubits high, on that bridge, which the people, in their folly, have built, — and set up an image over on the top of the arch, and commanded all the people from the land of Sodom on the south, the Westonites, and all the other tribes in the North to assemble on the fourth day of the seventh month, and bow their heads to the image which the King has set up.

"8. And behold the people assembled according to the King's decree, and did as he had commanded."

V. Page 170.

The following letter, referred to in Note XVIII., was evidently written in reply to some intimations, on the part of the authorities of Duxbury, that the inhabitants of the place were disposed to neutrality.

"His Britannic Majesty's Ship Leander,
10th August, 1814.

"To the Selectmen and the Committee of Safety
of the Town of Duxbury.

"Gentlemen:

"I am to acknowledge your letter of the 9th inst. I can easily understand the motives which have induced

your addressing me, and much as I deplore this war, and deeply as I feel for the distresses of innocent individuals, a sense of public duty will always compel me to follow up the utmost extent of my instructions. But in the belief that your town has neither the means or [nor the ?] intention of carrying on offensive war, I shall as far as lays [lies ?] in my power endeavor to respect it accordingly. The schooner* you require shall therefore be returned as soon as opportunity permits, and that [as soon as ?] I have obtained the sanction of Captain Ragget, which I shall urge by every honest means in my power. But I must again remark in addition to the observations contained in the letter to the magistrates of Plymouth, which you allude to, that nothing but neutrality *the most perfect* † will induce me, either to respect your fishing craft, or the town itself. It is not in the character of Englishmen to act harshly towards the unoffending,— though in a state of war, — unless provoked to a system of retaliation. And thus far (though not authorized) I am sure I only speak the sentiments of my superior officers. Be therefore tranquil! carry on war only to defend your own homes, and do not permit your fishermen to assist directly or indirectly, — as any deviation will be marked some day or other!

"The fishermen who took possession of the Rover did wrong; but not more so than those who towed in the barge sunk off the battery near Plymouth. Had they left her to her fate, no mischief would have perhaps ever

* Reference is probably made to the schooner "Despatch," of the circumstances of whose capture I shall have occasion to speak in the sequel.

† These words are emphasized in the manuscript.

threatened fishermen of Plymouth: but, as it is, until that barge is returned, it must be supposed that the fishermen of Plymouth are authorized by their government to intrigue in war.

"I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
"Your most Obedient Servant,
"George R. Collier,
"Captain of H. B. M. S. Leander."

"P. S. As there are some American armed boats *disguised as fishermen*, it is necessary that *every* fishing boat should be examined, and unless they bring to when fired at, they will be punished accordingly."

In the year 1814 there were two of the enemy's frigates off the coast of Massachusetts, the "Leander," Captain Collier — author of the above letter — and the "Lahogue," captain Ragget; besides the flag-ship "Spencer." Their presence was a source of great annoyance to the fishing schooners, and other small craft, which plied their trades in Massachusetts Bay. Barges, or captured vessels used as such, sent out from these ships, were constantly on the look-out for prizes. Among the craft most exposed to capture were small open boats, employed in conveying articles of merchandise along the shore; especially flour, which had been sent from New York, and transported across the Isthmus of Cape Cod, on its way to Boston market.

The fishermen of Duxbury were doomed to feel this grievance severely. Several of their vessels fell into the hands of the enemy, and the crews of some of them suffered detention as prisoners. This was the case with the schooner "Cherub," owned by Joshua Winsor, and manned by John Winsor, George Winsor (son of Joshua), and James Chandler, who had a brief experience of the

fate of captives on board of the "Lahogue." Another instance was that of the schooner "Ospra," belonging to Ahira Wadsworth, and taken by the "Leander;" on board of which frigate the captured crew — Stephen Churchill, James Woodward, and a small boy — were compelled to make a similar temporary trial of involuntary exile.

The crew of another schooner, the "Despatch," seized by the enemy about the same time, were more fortunate. This vessel was owned by Nathaniel Winsor, Jr., Elipha-let Waterman, and David Turner. On or about the 15th of July, 1814, she sailed from the wharf in Duxbury on a fishing excursion, and, just after sunset, on the following day, was captured by the prize sloop "Rover" from the "Lahogue," and a barge from the "Leander," sailing n company. The crew of the schooner, consisting of Samuel Hunt, Noah Simmons, Joseph Prior, and George Winsor (son of James), were transferred to the "Rover," — the crew of the latter taking charge of the "Despatch," — and ordered to follow their captors to the "Lahogue." The direction was complied with, at first, but as night was fast approaching, every effort was made to impede the progress of the sloop by drags, and as soon as darkness prevented observation, she was put about for the Gurnet, and shortly reached in safety the harbor of Duxbury; whither her rightful owner came, not long afterwards, and took her again into his possession.*

The "Despatch" herself was finally rescued by a series of cunning devices on the part of a single individual.

* The "Rover" was owned in New Bedford, and had been in the service of the enemy, as a cruiser for prizes, some time previous to her rescue in the manner related. This incident explains Captain Collier's allusion to the "Rover" in his letter.

After her capture she was fitted out as one of the enemy's cruisers, carrying a brass swivel forward, and two small cannon amidships, and having a crew of twenty-one men, including officers and pilot. The latter was a Captain Mayo, of Eastham, a prisoner, who had been taken in a small boat on his way to Boston, with articles of provision for the market. He was large and athletic in his person, and a man of remarkable courage. The schooner had been thus employed, plying between the Capes, two or three weeks, when, in consequence of a strong wind from the north, and appearances of a coming storm, Captain Mayo was ordered to make a harbor near Manomet. On the way thither, it was suggested by some one that the schooner would sail faster if she were somewhat lightened; and while the crew were throwing overboard a portion of the ballast for this purpose, Mayo hinted that it would be well to remove enough of it to make room for comfortable sleeping quarters. When the vessel had been thus relieved of a good part of her ballast, it was found, as the pilot had expected, that she would not bear a sufficient press of canvass to reach the proposed harbor. The thought now flashed upon the minds of the officers that Mayo was contriving to get the schooner ashore, and thus effect his escape. It is obvious that this was in fact his design; and he had the more confidence of success, as subsequently appeared, from the fact that most of those on board were in a state of intoxication. Nor did the threats and big oaths, with which his suspicious behavior was assailed, deter him from persisting in his object; for when, a moment after, he was ordered to cast anchor upon the spot, he took occasion, while letting the anchor go, and just as the cook had called all hands below for

dinner, to cut the cable nearly off with his knife. This done, he followed the rest to their repast. In a few moments the schooner was observed to be rolling and tossing about at a fearful rate, and some of the crew, rushing on deck, cried out, "She's adrift!" "She's adrift!" Mayo pretended to be greatly surprised and alarmed, exclaiming, "pay out!" "pay out!" But it proved all in vain to pay out, for the anchor itself was gone. He then made haste to haul in the cable, taking care to rub the end of it so that no mark of the knife might appear. As there was no other anchor on board, nothing now, in fact, was left but to run ashore; and as no one else was sufficiently acquainted with the coast, it was left with Mayo to choose the safest spot. This he saw fit to select on Eastham flats, about three-fourths of a mile from his own door. After the vessel was aground, and the tide had ebbed to four feet alongside, Mayo jumped overboard, and was moving backwards towards the shore — his companions all the while threatening to shoot him if he did not return — when he espied the tavern-sign of a Mr. Crossman swinging briskly in the wind, and pointing to it he represented to the crew that it was a signal for the citizens of the place to muster, and advised them to throw over their arms and munitions in token of surrender. By this time, having nearly gained the beach, he turned and ran. Proceeding into the village of Eastham, he was soon joined by an armed force of about forty men, with whom he boldly retraced his steps, to take formal possession of the vessel and prisoners. The latter, it was found, had disposed of their weapons in accordance with Mayo's suggestion.

The selectmen of Eastham, fearing an attack upon the place in retaliation for this seizure, thought it expedient to

release the prisoners, and accordingly despatched two whaleboats to convey them to the flag-ship of the enemy. These boats soon returned with a requisition, from the officer of that ship, upon the towns of Orleans, Brewster, and Chatham, to contribute three thousand dollars, by way of exemption from further vengeance, besides giving up all the arms and other captured property except the schooner.

Soon after the news of this vessel's rescue reached Duxbury, two of her owners, Messrs. Waterman and Turner, and two other persons, Captains Martin and Isaac Winsor, repaired to Eastham for the purpose of bringing her home. With the assistance of Captain Mayo, by whose adroitness the schooner had been recovered from the enemy, they very soon got her off the flats, and then proceeded with her to Barnstable, in order to adjust the preliminaries of her final release with the custom-house officer of that place, who claimed the vessel as the property of the United States. They were required by him to give a bond for the payment of all expenses, and Mr. Waterman, Mr. Turner, and Captain Mayo affixed their names to the instrument. The latter took passage in the schooner to Duxbury; and, on the way, he agreed to assume all the responsibility of the bond for the sum of fifty dollars. The offer was readily acceded to by the other parties; but the bargain proved a dear one to Captain Mayo, for a suit was afterwards brought by the revenue officer, referred to, which resulted in an expense to the former of about eight times this amount.*

* For the facts of the narrative thus far, in regard to the seizure of vessels belonging to Duxbury, I am indebted to Captain

One other instance, in illustration of the vexations to which the fishermen of Duxbury were subjected, in the time of the war, remains to be mentioned. In the autumn of the same year, during which the events already related took place, a small sloop, named the "Little Jane," and owned by Perez H. Sampson, James Soule and Richard Soule, was sailing in the bay with a pleasure party of some twenty persons, when a force of the enemy suddenly appeared in a barge and gave chase. The pursuit at length became so close that those on board of the sloop, not liking the prospect of being made prisoners, determined to push for the shore at the nearest suitable point. They accordingly drove the vessel aground upon Plymouth Flats, between Eel River and Beach Point, and, taking to the water, made good their escape. The crew of the barge continued their course to the sloop, and used every effort to get her afloat; until, on perceiving the shore all along between Manomet and Plymouth village thronged with men hastening to the spot, they deemed it prudent to retreat. The vessel was finally restored to her owners; but they were first obliged to satisfy a claim for salvage on the part of those citizens of Plymouth who had effected her rescue.

Captain Collier, in the postscript of his letter, speaks of "some American armed boats *disguised* as fishermen." Whether any of the fishing vessels of Duxbury or Ply-

---

Charles F. Winsor of that place, who did me the favor to take down in writing the reports of several of those persons whose names have been mentioned as owners or navigators of the vessels taken, and most of whom were eye-witnesses of what occurred on the occasions of their capture.

mouth were thus armed, while in the hands of their owners, does not elsewhere appear. But it was notoriously a common practice with the enemy, whenever any of these vessels fell into their hands, to convert them immediately into cruisers, under the show of being engaged in their usual business of fishing, or transporting merchandise along the coast. The "Despatch," for example, soon after her capture, was disguised by them as a coaster laden with furniture; and there are persons in Duxbury who remember to have seen her off the Gurnet with chairs hanging over her quarters. The "Rover," appeared in the same dress at the time the "Despatch" was taken; and the object of exchanging the crews of these vessels on that occasion was, to make a cruiser of the latter, which might not be so easily recognized in her true character as the "Rover;" for this sloop had been long enough in the service of the enemy to be well known as one of their prizes. So that probably her rescue, in the manner I have stated, was not a matter of great regret with them, inasmuch as her place had been supplied by a new vessel whose disguises, for a while at least, would be less readily detected.

W. Page 178.

The names of Hon. Seth Sprague's children, and the dates of their birth are as follow: —

Phineas,	born	November	2d,	1779.
William,	"	December	28th,	1780.
Deborah,	"	August	19th,	1782.
Welthea,	"	June	2d,	1784.
Ruth,	"	December	4th,	1785.
Seth,	"	November	21st,	1787.
Mercy,	"	December	25th,	1789.
Zeruiah,	"	September	5th,	1791.
Peleg,	"	April	27th,	1793.
Caroline,	"	October	6th,	1795.
Hannah,	"	September	26th,	1797.
Judith,	"	April	25th,	1799.
Nancy,	"	April	23d,	1801.
Lucy,	"	April	2d,	1803.
Sarah,	"	September	20th,	1805.